

THE

## LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

[ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.]

No. 1109.—VOL. XLIII.

FOR THE WEEK ENDING AUGUST 2, 1884.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[A MYSTERIOUS ADVENTURE.]

## CINDERELLA.

## CHAPTER XI.

"PROBABLY Pauline's inexperienced head was rather turned by the sensation she created at the Duchess's ball, and, indeed it was no wonder.

She was like a plant that had been kept in a cellar suddenly being brought out into a full blaze of sunshine among a brilliant assemblage of other flowers.

Could she be the same girl, she asked herself, who that very evening had been doing her sisters' hair and lacing their dresses, like any paid Abigail? and now she was standing in the same set with Royalty, with an Earl for her partner, pearls on her neck, a French costume on her back—the cynosure of half the eyes in the room!

Her aunt presented her to many of her friends. She was no longer unknown. Names she had heard loudly vaunted by her sisters now became realities.

She was noticed by the great ones of the

land—not with patronising indifference, but with kind interest. This was partly due to her aunt, who was evidently a person of some note, and partly to her youth and pretty face and pretty dress; besides, was she not the Countess Pauline, one of themselves?

The ball was carried on till daylight, but her aunt took her reluctant niece home long before that hour and deposited her herself safely at her own hall-door in the moonlight.

She stepped out on the granite steps, and stood there as her fairy godmother drove away; then she pinched her arm when the carriage had rolled out of sight, and asked herself,—

"Was it not all a dream? Was she actually the same shabby girl the Princess had found on those steps just five hours previously?"

No! She shook out her satin skirt, and looked down at her worn satin slippers, and put her hand up to her throat and felt her pearl necklace. No, she was not!

She had seen the great world at last. She could never go back to what she was that very afternoon, and never be the same again.

She could hardly sleep, her mind was in

such a tumult. It was actually too full. She had too many things to think of, and had enough material for thought to last her a lifetime—all her partners, all the new and kind faces who had beamed on her; but she thought of no one as much as Sir Philip.

She gave him far more than his proper share of attention in her busy little brain. She admitted to herself that she liked him far the best.

How easy it was to get on with him, and yet how clever he was! He looked it, although he only talked nonsense, it must be confessed!

But her other partners had praised him, and said he was a wonderful orator, quite the rising man of his party, and that already his counsels and views carried great weight.

He was a diplomatist of the first order, and had already carried out two or three difficult and delicate negotiations with great success.

"You see," said one of her partners, a little lord, with vacuous blue eyes and a fair, pointed beard, "Curzon is such a cool, self-possessed fellow; he never loses his head—at any rate with men," he added to himself, as by a happy after thought. "He is a great

society man, too; but he does not care for the country, nor hunting amusements, or country people. He likes town and the Continent. He says the bucolic element in men and women bores him too frightfully."

If he did not care for country people why was he so civil to her? Pauline asked herself. Why did he dance with her four times, take her to supper, sit out with her, put her in the carriage beside her aunt, and press her hand at parting?

This was a conundrum she asked herself over and over again, and when the morning sun was streaming into the room she fell asleep with it still unanswered.

She did not see her sisters when she came downstairs. She was not sent for as usual to help with toilettes; indeed, it was her duty to wait on them without being called for.

But she felt that things "were not what they were" since the preceding evening. She was no longer the daughter of a mysterious, low-born nobody. She was the Countess Pauline in her mother's right, and it would not become the Countess Pauline to do hair, put on shoes and stockings for her two half-sisters, considering what half-sisters they were.

She shrank from meeting them, and did not feel elated, and did not intend to show even them, so to speak, and avenge herself of a hundred thousand slights which may seem strange.

She swallowed a hasty breakfast, and taking up her sunburnt old straw hat (she was no fairy protégée this morning; she had come back to her rage) went out for a long ramble in the wilderness called grounds, and remained resting about for hours, waiting in a kind of waking and delicious dream.

But at length the pangs of hunger warned her that it was time to turn her steps homewards, and satisfy her healthy young appetites.

As she pushed her way through a thickly overgrown path another railing (and caused by herself) made her stop and look calmly round.

The instant she did so the noise ceased. She then went on a little further, fancying that it might be some large dog that had strayed into the woods, for there were no keepers now to have an eye on such intruders, and then something she could not account for compelled her to look back, and she saw emerging just into the path on hands and knees from among the bushes a man.

The stealth of his attitude, which bore resemblance to the crawl of a reptile, frightened her more than the man himself, and, without pausing for another glance, she fled away back towards the more frequented part of the pleasure-ground as fast as her nimble feet could carry her.

He had not seen her, for his head was in the opposite direction; but who was he? Who was he waiting for? What wicked errand had brought him into the wood? Was he hiding—was he lying in wait?

Pauline could not answer any of those questions, and would not have known him if she saw him again.

He had black hair, and wore a soft, much-creased felt hat. That was all she noticed.

Would it be well to tell her sisters of her adventure or not? she asked herself with a beating heart.

But the man in the wood was quickly put out of her head when she reached the house, and saw her aunt's carriage at the door. She was paying a visit to her sister's sisters. A state visit.

"She had been with them for half-an-hour already," so Phoebe whispered to Pauline, with bated breath—Phoebe, who now, as Pauline took off her hat and smoothed down her ruffled hair, accorded her a much larger share of respect than formerly.

They were all in the drawing-room when the young lady walked in. Her aunt was seated in a high arm-chair, with a footstool at her feet, her hands on either arm of the chair, her look and manner that of a judge deliver-

ing sentence and dispensing justice, and her sisters had the appearance of two culprits in the dock.

Pauline's entrance was the signal for her, to rise and embrace her, in the Continental fashion, patting her on the cheek, and saying,—

"And how are you this morning, my little Cinderella? I have been telling your kind sisters of the arrangements I am making for you. You are to live like a lady; I shall make a proper allowance, and this house will be kept up in a more suitable style while you live in it. You will go into society, have a maid, a manservant, and pony-carriage for your own use, and your mother's diamonds will be restored to you within ten days," darting a glance of warning and menace at Matilda as she spoke that seemed to shrivel her up in her chair.

"And now, my love, I am going. Business of importance calls me to London to-morrow morning, and I have many arrangements to make before I start; so, good-bye," once more embracing her. "You may give me your arm to the carriage," she added, and with a magnificent bow to the other sisters she hobbled out of the room, and was soon trotting down the avenue, and out of sight.

Pauline found that things began to mend immediately. She was promoted to one of the best bedrooms the same day; her boxes of new dresses arrived, too, and also her maid.

Gardeners came to fix up the place, painters to paint the doors and windows, an upholsterer sent in some chairs, hangings and carpets.

All this was done under the eye of an over-seeing, a foreman—an employee of the Palace's, and within a very short time Mount Rivers was a different-looking place.

It was transformed as it were, for many hands make light work. The improvements were all carried out in a week or ten days.

Visitors began to call with marvellous rapidity. Visitors were shown in. Mount Rivers had made quite a paw-sawed departure. It was rumoured about that Pauline had come in for an enormous dowry, and should be cultivated.

Lady Farrington was one of the first callers, a pretty, bright, vivacious little woman, who eyed Pauline keenly as she talked about the weather and the roses; but not half so keenly as her companion, a pale, thin, orange-haired blonde, who gazed at her with a stare that a basilisk might have envied, and who never opened her lips—nor once!

She was a Frenchwoman, a widow, immensely wealthy, a Madame de St. antecedents unknown.

Why did she eye the young Countess with such a malignant, searching, and contemptuous gaze?

They also had a visit from Sir Philip himself. He came and laid himself out wholly to please her elder sisters. Oh, crafty Sir Philip! scarcely addressing himself to Pauline (except by looks).

The house was quite spick and span when he called, and ready to receive everybody. A smart man-servant opened the door; the drawing-room looked charming, full of flowers, old-fashioned furniture, pretty new hangings, and soft new carpets and rugs—no longer the faded, shabby-looking apartment it had been of late years.

The elder sisters were all smiles, of course, and received the civilities of the *parti* of the neighbourhood with effusive and delighted surprise.

Could it be possible, Carry asked herself, that he was coming to see her? Without doubt this was in her mind, as Pauline watched her casting her eyes up and down, and constantly displaying her hands, which were small and white, and one of her best points, and beaming and bridling and, in her younger sister's opinion, making herself look extremely ridiculous.

They (the elders) eagerly accepted an invitation to drive on Sir Philip's coach the following afternoon; and, sure enough, the next day his beautiful team, well known in the Row in

London and at the meets of the Coaching Club at the Magazine, four dark Browns, perfect, matchless in size and action.

Not a little to Matilda's and Carry's surprise Pauline was invited to take the box-seat, and they were established behind.

Never had she been on so lofty a perch before, never driven at such a pace. It was delightful!

Her sisters were exceedingly nervous, and did not enjoy themselves at all, giving little suppressed exclamations and screams as they turned a sharp corner or thundered down a hill, and they had not the pleasant conversation of Sir Philip, as she had, to modify the situation.

He found time to talk to her a good deal, in spite of his four vivacious horses, who required constant attention, and he told her that his sister, Lady Farrington, was going to ask her on a visit.

"Would she go?"

"I shall be very happy, indeed," she answered, most thankfully.

"She is going to write, I know, and she will come for you herself," he returned. "I want to see a great deal of you. You know I'm nearly always at her house now."

To this observation Pauline made no reply, beyond becoming extremely red.

"Do you like me, Cinderella?" he asked, audaciously.

"Like you? Oh, yes, I like you," she returned, with much embarrassment.

"And will you come out driving with me often when you are staying with my sister?"

"I don't know. I really must leave that to her," she replied, basely. "And here we are! How quickly time has gone," she added, musingly, as they dashed through the entrance-gates once more.

"I'm glad you think so. We've made a round of about fifteen miles, and it seems to me we have only been five minutes, and we are actually back again at the hall-door. I wish we had it all to commence over again," he whispered as he helped her carefully down, and then assisted her relations to alight; and, after lingering for nearly half-an-hour, in spite of his home-ward impatience, he reluctantly drove away at last.

The same evening Pauline received a very friendly note from Lady Farrington, asking her to pay her a visit in the most pressing terms.

"Do come," she said. "We shall be so delighted to have you, and to become better acquainted. If you answer in the affirmative I shall drive over for you on Thursday afternoon, about three o'clock."

Pauline's sisters were by no means too well pleased that their names were left out of the invitation, and exchanged whispered remarks, and shrugs, and significant glances, and audibly "wondered how Pauline could have so little pride as to go to a house to which her nearest relations were not asked."

But, as her nearest relations had never let this stand in their way when they had accepted invitations in which her name was omitted, she boldly said "Yes," although it was further hinted to her that it was now that she was "somebody" that she was noticed, and not for her intrinsic value.

The two amiable ladies hated their step-sister with a more active dislike than ever, though they were obliged to keep the open manifestation of it for each other. Only envy is a strong incentive to a good, warranted family hate.

Two days later Lady Farrington had taken Pauline away in her lovely little Victoria, with its high-stepping cobs; and as she was whisked from the door she kissed her hand repeatedly to her two sisters, whom she left standing on the steps, looking the embodiment of two thunder-clouds, their eyes darting forked lightning.

Farrington Court was a place built in the Italian style, with white stuccoed front and verandah and pillared portico, and as luxurious as it was possible for any country house to be



where the master possessed riches and the mistress taste.

There was in time for five o'clock tea, and he sat in the boudoir before removing their hats.

The boudoir was hung with rose-coloured satin; the carpet was pale grey, the furniture black and gold, and many lovely ornaments were scattered about, as if of no value.

It was not empty as they entered. The woman with the orange-coloured hair was lounging in a chair, dressed in a black satin to gown half-smothered in priceless lace, with a French novel between her languid fingers, and a sneer on her lips.

She gave Pauline a very cool shake of the hand, and murmured from head to foot, as she exclaimed in an exhausted voice that, "They were earlier than she expected, and that the afternoon had not been dull," in answer to her hostess's eager apologies. "Oh no, the time passed pleasantly enough," she drawled. "Your brother has been sitting here, and I've been singing to him."

"Oh, indeed! Well I'm very glad to hear it. Here's tea at last, Valerie, would you mind making it. I'm half dead," said Lady Farrington. "The heat this afternoon is positively quite tropical. You were wise to stay at home."

Lady Farrington and Madame Bert were evidently most intimate bosom friends. Pauline was the odd one out, for though Lady Farrington was very pleasant to her, she could see that her visit was anything but welcome to the other; that she had taken a most violent aversion to her, and was at no pains to conceal the fact.

"Do you take sugar, Miss Rivers?" she drawled, with the tongue poised in her fingers; "or are you sweet enough?"

"Sugar, if you please," not deigning to notice her rude question, and receiving her cup from her hands, and a look accompanying it that said, "I wish to Heaven it was poison."

Pauline had never done anything to her, never spoken to her, and was aware that she did not deserve such looks nor such sneers, and was resolved that she would not submit to them tamely. Her eyes probably said as much as she looked full into Madame Bert's pale, greenish-grey ones, as they met hers point-blank, and told her that she would meet her on her own grounds. It should be war to the knife! For what reason, Pauline, if put on her oath, could not have sworn. The cool contemptuous looks of the other, and her cynical smiles made her young blood all aflame, and she picked up the gauntlet without hesitation, and for a woman's reason, which is as intangible as air.

## CHAPTER XII.

Sir Philip was present when Pauline came down to dinner, in all the glories of one of her new toilettes—a black lace dress, with open body, and elbow sleeves—and her pearl necklace round her slender white throat. There were a good many other people in the room—two or three neighbouring ladies, and their daughters and husbands—Madame Bert, in a magnificent magnolia satin, made with severe and artistic simplicity. She was sitting on the sofa beside Sir Philip, eagerly whispering to him behind a large feather fan, but he sprang up when he saw Pauline, and hurried to greet her warmly, standing beside her afterwards instead of returning to his late splendid companion, and taking no notice of various signals from that lady's eyes and fan.

He introduced to her his friend—his secretary, as she afterwards discovered, a Mr. Lorraine—a very handsome, dark young man, with a singularly refined, well-bred face—a face that, putting good looks aside, was interesting to contemplate. It looked as if it had known trouble, but that it was the mark of a proud disposition, one that could "suffer and be strong."

She sat next to him at dinner, and discovered that he had a charming manner, a

charming voice, was full of anecdote, repartee and epigram, had evidently seen a great deal of the world and life, although he was probably younger than Sir Philip by several years.

Still with all his fascination there was an air of cold reserve about him; he never approached personalities or compliments, never spoke of himself, never touched the outside border of flirtation.

And she rose from the table much attracted, but feeling instinctively that he was really as great a stranger to her as when they had first sat down, and that although she was sympathetically affected by him, in despite of herself, he would never give her another thought.

"You lucky girl; you sat next to Mr. Lorraine," said a lively young lady to her in the drawing-room after dinner. "I envied you, I can tell you. We are all most frightfully smitten, but he is like a block of marble. No one has made an impression even. Isn't it too distressing? He has no vulnerable point, no little weakness for any one."

"Yes, most extraordinary," she returned, laughing.

"He goes everywhere with Sir Philip. He is his secretary, you know," she gabbled on, pleased with her theme, "but also his greatest friend. I believe he saved his life or Sir Philip saved his life, a something or other in that style, and he is so charmingly mysterious. No one has ever made out who he really is, or where he comes from, or anything about him, and we are all simply dying with curiosity!"

"How distressing!" exclaimed Pauline, with ironical smiles.

"Ah, my dear"—her companion had only known her seven minutes by the clock—"you may laugh as much as you like; you will be a victim yourself before long just the same as the rest of us."

"No, indeed," reddening with a little tinge of consciousness. "I am not so susceptible. Do you mean to say," she demanded, bluntly, "that you are all in love with him?" opening her eyes to their fullest extent.

"Oh, I won't say that. I can't explain it. He, you will know by experience, establishes a most extraordinary influence over you; you feel that you would do anything he wished, that when he is present you think of no one else. Although he is poor, and no one knows anything about him, he has far more influence with people than Sir Philip—even Sir Philip, with all his riches, and country places, and yacht, and carriage and four."

"It must be a kind of mesmerism," she cried, "or else it is the mystery about him which enhances his charm, or else you must all be mad!"

At that instant the door opened, admitting the gentlemen. Sir Philip was at once waylaid by Madame Bert, and his secretary came straight over to the young ladies on the sofa, and took a chair beside Pauline. As he did so, the young lady on the sofa at Pauline's other hand, who had been recently discussing him so frankly, emphasised his arrival by giving Pauline a cruel nudge from her very sharp red elbow.

"What were you talking about in such an engrossing manner?" he asked, as he crossed his legs. "What very interesting topic was the subject of conversation? Pray don't let me interrupt you?"

"We were talking of—of mesmerism," said Pauline, casting wildly about for something to say. She could not tell him they had been discussing him.

"Really; and do you believe in it?" he asked, lazily.

"No, I cannot say that I do," she returned.

"I know nothing about it."

"It was well you added that. Madame Bert is a renowned mesmerist, and would soon convert you. Over some her power is unbounded," glancing across at her and his patron, Sir Philip, as they stood by the open piano, in earnest parley.

"I do not wish to be converted," she replied,

stiffly, "and I—" Here she paused, discretion closed her lips for once.

"You were going to say something?" he remarked, looking at her expectantly, and surveying her calmly with his critical dark eyes.

"Yes, but I have changed my mind. One should think twice before speaking," she murmured, with heightened colour.

"Nevertheless I know what you were about to say. Shall I tell you?"

"If you please," she rejoined, with an incredulous little laugh. He asked carefully—

"You were going to say, I don't like Madame Bert, were you not?" leaning towards her and lowering his voice.

Pauline made no reply to this rude question. It was no business of his.

"I see you are vexed with me," he proceeded, "but you need not be. Your instinct is a right one," lowering his voice once more. "Beware of Madame Bert. She is a dangerous woman."

"And why—why do you tell me this?" she stammered.

"Hush!" authoritatively, "she is going to sing. I will tell you another time," and here the chords of the grand piano sounded throughout the room under a practised hand, and the notes of Madame Bert's voice came pealing forth.

It was a marvellous organ, so powerfully sustained, so sympathetic! No wonder every ear in the room was turned to its outpourings, no wonder that you could hear a pin drop when she paused. She sang without notes, a ballad first; when that came to an end her fingers strayed into a wild Creole love-song, whilst all the time Sir Philip leant over the piano and one bewitched, his eyes absolutely fastened on her face.

"How," Pauline asked herself, with a sense of shame and humiliation, "could she ever have imagined that he cared for her? Madame was the very mistress of his soul, she felt," (please kindly remember that she was very young); a huge lump in her throat, and aching sinking at her heart, as she realised what a concealed little fool she had been; and still the notes of the singer's exquisite voice rose and fell in the stillness, still she held everyone's emotions as it were in the smallest hollow of her hand; and then gradually, gradually the sounds came fainter, fainter, and fainter, and died away in a dead silence.

"She reminds me of a siren. Does she not?" said a voice beside Pauline.

She looked up quickly (I'm afraid there were tears in her eyes), and met the dark, unfathomable orbs of Mr. Lorraine. Had he read her secret? "Yes, she is a siren, yellow hair and all. What do you think?"

"I know as little about sirens as I do about mesmerism," she returned, coldly. "Pray why should you fancy that she, Madame Bert, is like a siren?" following her with her eyes, as she went towards the open French windows with Sir Philip, who was carrying her fan and wrap, with gallant solicitude.

"Because she attracts men in spite of themselves with her voice, and makes shipwreck of their lives. Is that a plain answer, Countess Pauline?"

It was a plain answer, with a vengeance, and painful doubts now became doubly painful certainties. Shortly afterwards, in answer to a signal from Lady Farrington, Mr. Lorraine got up and walked away.

The next day most of the party at Farrington went for a drive on Sir Philip's dog. Madame Bert on the box—a young cavalry officer and Pauline behind, two other couples also on the roof.

Pauline was resolved to carry a bold front, to show no sign of disappointment, and to smile and laugh and be cheerful, and ready to be pleased, and her companion was really most amusing; their laughter was continuous, their conversation incessant.

She remarked that now and then their coachman was listening with a half-averted face, and that he looked rather gloomy, in spite of Madame's brilliant endeavours to chain his attention.

They had a tea picnic among the ruins of an old castle, and climbed about in couples, exploring the moat, chapel, tilt-yard, and up its rickety stairs, "to view the landscape o'er" from the leads.

Captain Bohun was still Pauline's companion, and she could see that their host's eyes were constantly travelling in their direction, and, after awhile, he followed them with the whole of his body, and attached himself to their company, as Madame was much exhausted, and had refused to climb the stairs. N.B. (Madame was no chicken.)

"Look here, Bohun," he said, "supposing we change partners for awhile? Madame Bert knows your people; she is resting below, and I'll take care of your young lady until tea time, eh?"

Captain Bohun did not quite fancy the arrangement, nor seize on the exchange with any great cordiality, but he was obliged to submit to it with a good grace; and, returning reluctantly downstairs, left Pauline and Sir Philip on the roof alone.

"I'm so glad you managed to come over with Mary," he said, effusively, "and I've not had a word with you yet."

She could not very well say what she thought—that was his fault, not hers—that since his greeting to her in the drawing-room the previous day, he had not once noticed her or opened his lips to her, and had been wholly taken up with Madame Bert, the yellow-haired siren. Perhaps her ever tell-tale face spoke for her.

"You seem very much pleased with young Bohun. I heard you laughing nearly the whole way behind me," he proceeded, leaning his elbows on the stone coping, and surveying her discontentedly. "I never found his society so excessively amusing."

"Did you not?" she exclaimed, saucily, and resolved to show him that what was sauce for the gander was equally sauce for the goose. "But then you see you are a man, and it's different."

"And you like him?" morosely.

"Yes, very much indeed. He is the most amusing person I have ever met. I'm quite looking forward to our drive back," smiling serenely.

"Oh, are you! but I intend that you are to be my companion. Turn about is fair play. I had Madame coming, and it's your turn going home. Let us see if she will find Bohun as amusing," combatively.

"But she came with you," expostulated the young lady, "and she will think she ought to go back with you, and"—frankly looking at him in the face—"don't mind me—it's quite all the same to me."

"I daresay," he rejoined, slightly offended, "but it is not to me, and it's my privilege to choose my partner for the box-seat."

And so the matter was settled, but by no means to everyone's satisfaction.

Captain Bohun came to Pauline, and threw himself down at her feet in the grass after tea, and said in a grumbling voice,—

"I say, have you heard that Curzon wants you to drive home with him? I call it an awful shame—don't you? No end of a sell for me. I'm to have Madame for a change, and she and I are not kindred spirits. What a tongue she has! Arrows of poison are under her lips! She gives me quite a creepy feel, as if there was something uncanny about her, or as if she had the evil eye! What do you think?"

"Don't let her mesmerise you, that's all," she remarked, sarcastically.

"Oh, she wouldn't be bothered with mesmerising me. She is too much taken up with her old friend, Sir Philip. I'm much too small a fish to be worth frying. She knew him in days of yore. She's madly in love with him—anyone can see that with half an eye. She shows her hand rather too plainly for a clever woman of the world, as she is said to be, and she could stab any other woman that she happens so much as to look at. She's not very fond of you," with a significant laugh.

No. Pauline knew that, and Madame's face, frantically as she sought to control her feelings, was a study in white fury as she beheld her handed to her recent post—the box-seat.

However, she restrained herself, and was resolved not to permit Philip to indulge in a *litt-d-tte* at any cost.

She ignored her only too well pleased soldier beside her, and leant over and talked to the coachman most of the way home.

"Do you remember this? Oh, I was forgetting to tell you that," and dragging in subject after subject with a genius and a perseverance worthy of a better cause, subjects that left Pauline entirely out of the conversation, despite of Sir Philip's efforts and her own.

In skill of this kind—in fencing with these weapons (words), Madame Bert was far, far the superior of them both; and, on the whole, she had succeeded in her aim, and spoiled their pleasant *litt-d-tte* on the way home most effectually.

"She didn't give you much chance of getting in a word edgewise, did she?" said Captain Bohun, as he handed Pauline her parasol with a knowing look. "She's a clever woman if ever there was one. Too clever by half, in my opinion," in a lower voice as she came near.

All that evening she again kept Sir Philip in her train. He never even looked at or spoke to Pauline—he hung over the piano, he played coarté with Madame alone in a room off the drawing-room, whilst the others assembled at a larger table and had a game of Nap.

Pauline was resolved now to be quite indifferent, if she could, and throw herself heart and soul into what was to her a novel and most exciting amusement, and to lose no time in building foolish castles in the air.

The next day she was sitting in one of the verandahs late in the afternoon, with a book on her knee, her eyes bent on the beautiful undulating park beneath her, and her thoughts very busy with the great change that had taken place in her prospects in such a short time, when all at once she was aware of voices in the room behind her—a writing-room, which opened on the verandah, but from which she was invisible. They were the voices of her hostess and Madame in eager conversation.

"I tell you, Marie, that you did me a very ill turn when you brought that girl here. What possessed you to ask her?" said one.

"Philip wished it. He pitied her, poor child, and he likes her."

"Impossible!" Don't you imagine that he is taken with her, a hideous, sallow-looking, scraggy girl, with two big black eyes, like holes burnt in a blanket. Philip has more taste, I should hope!" Madame's English was blunt and forcible.

"Well, he wished her to be asked, at any rate, perhaps on account of her romantic history, and it's quite too extraordinary."

Romantic fiddlestick! with a contemptuous laugh.

"Well, my dear Valerie, it is romantic; she is a Romancif, and—"

"I don't believe a word of it, not one; all a story trumped up by that old Russian witch, who is as mad as ever she can be in my opinion, and ought to be in an asylum years ago!"

"She is very rich, at any rate, mad or not, and this girl is to have all her money," in an awestruck whisper.

She wished she could get away; listeners never hear any good of themselves. But to arise and walk out on the verandah they would naturally see her; to enter the room she dared not, her moral courage would not permit her, for they would know that she must have heard all, so she sat with a quickly beating heart, as still as a mouse, and as frightened.

"How long is she going to stay?" proceeded Madame, aggressively.

"Oh! I suppose till after the ball, of course—next Thursday. I can't think why you are so

prejudiced, Valerie. I like her, she is a very harmless, unaffected, pretty girl, and if you knew the awful life she had with those dreadful sisters you would be sorry for her, and glad that she should have a little pleasure at last, Captain Bohun—"

"It's not Captain Bohun, it's Philip. She has made up her mind to captivate him, with her innocent airs and infantile graces, and that's what he likes, the modest maiden style," contemptuously. "Oh, I see through her game. But she shall never marry him, never, never, never! as long as my name is Valerie Bert. I would die sooner—she should die sooner. As for her sisters, I wish they had made an end of her," viciously.

"My dearest Valerie, why are you so violent? What has come over you? You are crazy," in a tone of friendly expostulation.

"I'll tell you, Marie. I know that that girl will work me some harm, I have a never failing sense that tells me such things. She is the antipodes to my good fortune. She is my evil genius, but I am hers. My powers, my will, are ten times stronger; and, in a struggle between us, she will be destroyed!"

"Valerie, Valerie! you are talking like a French novel," exclaimed her friend, in a voice of mild reproach—a voice that implied that she was accustomed to these outbursts. "And you know, dear, I am your friend. We were girls and schoolfellows in the old days in Paris at the Sacré Cœur, and I have always advised you for your good (though you would never profit by it). Let me give you one last bit of advice. Don't think of Philip—give him up."

"Never!" impetuously. "I adore him! Nothing shall separate us, nothing come between us. He is mine, and I am his. More than this, he worships me, when not influenced by that hideous girl. He dares not give one thought away from me, my handsome, talented, distinguished Philip. He shall be mine, and mine alone!"

"Valerie, you are talking monstrous nonsense—you are mad! on this subject you are crazy!"

"Mad! Am I? I have method in my madness. I tell you, Marie, that I hold him, your brother, in the very hollow of my hand!"

(To be continued.)

#### FALSE HAIR.

THE Greek, Egyptian, Carthaginian and Roman ladies, more than twenty-five centuries ago, made use of the most extravagant quantities of borrowed hair, and they wound into large protuberances upon the back of their heads, and to keep it in place used "hair-pins" of precisely the form in use at the present time.

The Roman women of the time of Augustus were especially pleased when they could outdo their rivals in piling upon their heads the highest tower of borrowed locks. They also arranged rows of curls formally around the sides of the head, and often the very fashionable damsels would have pendent curls in addition.

An extensive commerce was carried on in hair, and after the conquest of Gaul blonde hair, such as was grown upon the heads of German girls, became fashionable at Rome, and many a poor child of the forest, upon the banks of the Rhine, parted with her locks to adorn the wives and daughters of the proud conquerors.

The great Cæsar, indeed, in a most cruel manner, out of the hair of the vanquished Gauls and sent it to the Roman market for sale, and the cropped head was regarded in the conquered provinces as a badge of slavery.

The artistic, professional hairdressers of old Rome were employed at exorbitant prices to form the hair into fanciful devices, such as harps, diadems, wreaths, emblems of public temples and conquered cities, or to plait it into an incredible number of tresses, which were often lengthened by ribbons so as to reach to the feet, and loaded with pearls and clasp of gold.



## FOR HERSELF ALONE.

A fortune-hunter he had been called  
Till he met his fate, a maid,  
Reputed poor, in the home installed  
Of a cousin, whom all obeyed,  
By common report an heiress grand,  
With stocks and houses at her command.

With the latter's suitors at first was he,  
Till all were surprised—none less  
Than the maid herself—his suit to see  
At the shrine that was penniless,  
Or so alleged, and thence daily grow  
More ardent and lost in her beauty's glow.

"He is mad!" they murmured. "She too  
poor to wed,  
And he has but a stipend small."  
But on with his wooing the young man sped,  
Unheeding perversely all,  
Save the new sweet flame that was hourly  
fanned,  
Till at last he offered his heart and hand.

"Why, you cannot mean me, but my cousin!"  
said she,

"All the others confess her power;  
For she the heiress is thought to be,  
And I without charm or dower."

"Oh, I love you, I love you!" he could but  
say;  
And he clasped her form, nor she said him  
nay.

All the rest with pity for him looked on,  
As the wedding-day's sole alloy;  
But her cheek was flushed as the east's at  
dawn,

And his with unselfish joy.  
"I am yours," she murmured within his ear,  
"For myself, and not for my fortune dear."

"Your fortune? Ah, yes; 'tis your heart," he  
spoke,

"Which first truly kindled my own!"  
Then she merrily laughed at his puzzled look  
When they were once more alone.

"Oh, my cousin," she cried, "but helped a  
sham,  
'Tis I who the heiress was and am!"

"Forgive me, darling, the plot so old,  
But for love I oft pined and longed,  
And yet so feared that but for my gold  
In the end to be wooed and wronged!"  
But his kiss the pretty excuses stopped,  
As upon his bosom her fair head dropped.

Faded the world, with its babble and glare,  
Its gossip was naught to them,  
Secure in the jewels that make so fair  
Love's beautiful diadem;

For never had bloomed good-faith more sweet  
Than sprang that day from the dear deceit.  
N. D. U.

## A LOVER AND HIS LASS.

## CHAPTER X.

"When you speak sweet, I'd have you do it ever;  
When you sing, I'd have you buy and sell so."

But o'clock slowly striking from Marling  
church tower clock is borne to us over the  
summer air, and brings us back from the  
dream of love to the prosaic commonplace of  
one's daily life.

"Can it be six already?" I say, rousing myself  
from the silence of bliss which has enfolded  
us for the last minute or two. There comes a  
time when love can say no more, and falls  
back on silence to enforce its charm, and no  
doubt this has been our case. However, six  
o'clock means that I must hurry home to  
Gable End. How different a Celia to the one  
that set out heavy-hearted only two hours back!  
Two short—ah, too short—hours have worked a  
marvellous change in destiny. How time is  
laden with unknown joy or sorrow, weal or  
woe, happiness or misery! Strange, inexplicable

time, with his hoary head and ominous sickle  
what does he not bring in his hands to weary-  
ful mortals, and how very little we ever thank  
him for what he brings!

"Yes, dearest! It's absolutely six, so Marling  
clock tells us, and I've found it generally a  
steady old timekeeper to be relied on, which  
is more than one can say of the rectory clocks.  
Mr. Barlow always seems to forget to wind  
them up, and they run down as if they were  
indulging in an epileptic fit, now and then, as a  
small amusement for leisure hours."

"Well, I must go," I say with a sigh, for  
the present is very sweet, and I am loth to  
slide back into everyday existence, as it were.  
"Leila and Michael will be back from Bury  
market by this time I should think, and they  
will be waiting tea."

"And I must go too, my Celia, or Miss Hannah  
will be trotting to see what I am after. Not  
that I should mind that one atom, she is such  
a thoroughly dear old soul, so unlike the  
usual meddling old woman of the period. It's a  
blessing to know a dear ancient lady like her."

I agree most heartily with Colin in his  
encomiums.

"I wonder what she'll say when she hears  
that we have made up our minds to the  
marriage state?" he inquires, picking up my  
hat off the grass, where he flung it some time  
back, and giving it to me to put on.

I also inwardly wonder what aunt and  
Michael and Leila will say too, as I put my  
hat on, but I keep this marvelling to myself. I  
have a shrewd suspicion that they will not  
manifest that delight which one might  
naturally expect on such an occasion. How-  
ever, I cannot possibly help that.

"I am sure she will be very glad, indeed," I  
say, as I recall how urgently Miss Hannah  
advised me to go and ask Colin to swing me  
after I had refused to do so, and how, from the  
very first, she was desirous of our being good  
friends. Perhaps she even wished us to be  
lovers. If so, we need have no fear of her  
disapproval, at any rate.

"Now, mademoiselle, how about that six-  
pence?" he says, directing my attention to  
the forlorn-looking little coin lying against the  
tree root, a silent spectator of our love-making—  
part cause and effect of it, indeed, and to  
which I should be eternally grateful. "Are  
you going to leave it there in solitary state, or  
what?"

"Oh! my darling little sixpence!" I cry,  
pouncing on it, and raising it from mother  
earth. "Of course I would not leave it there  
on any consideration whatever. It's my talis-  
man; I'll have a hole bored through it and  
wear it as an amulet, a charm against evil  
spirits, male and female. The treasures of  
Monte Cristo would not compensate me for my  
dear little sixpence now," I end, jokingly, for  
my tearful mood has passed, and my spirits  
feel as light and joyous as winged angels fresh  
from Heaven.

"I believe you love that sixpence more than  
you do me," he urges, with pretence of re-  
proach in his tone. "I don't think I shall allow  
you to have it, lest you should get too fond of  
money. Your lover is not a man of wealth,  
remember, so you must not become a merce-  
nary little girl; that would never do."

There's no fear of my becoming mercenary,  
but I must keep my sixpence; 'tis mine. You  
know I earned it!" I return, gleefully.

"I'll tell you what we'll do with it. It shall  
be a talisman for both of us. I'll get it cut in  
half, with a hole bored through each piece, one  
for you and one for me, to remind us of each  
other, not that it ought to be necessary; still  
it will be a link between us two when we're  
apart. What say you to my plan, little  
damsel?"

"I like it. Have it done at once, will you?"  
tendering him the coin; "because I don't  
want to be without my amulet, remember; and  
now I must go, Colin," I end, uttering his name  
rather timidly, though I used to say it bravely  
enough to myself, not so very long back either.

"Come, then. I'll go your way to-day,  
though it's a long way round. Now I've got;

you, you perverse, small thing, I can't bear to  
let you go again; I shall go and see the father  
this evening; the sooner the better, then, you'll  
quite belong to me—not even the shadow of  
cousin Michael between us. Come."

And taking my palm in his we saunter over  
the meadows, away from the running river,  
the goarled old hawthorn, who can add one  
more story to its long list of many years come  
and gone before; linger hand-in-hand heedless  
of anything in this wide, wide world but our-  
selves and our love, so truly selfish is the  
winged god Eros.

We are close upon Gable End, when round  
the corner of the road comes the quickly  
trotting mare and dogcart, with Michael and  
Leila side by side, facing full upon us.

It is a hedge-rowed, tree lined road, and so  
the sound was deadened to our unmindful ears,  
wrapt in our own conversation. My first in-  
stinct is to pull my hand from Colin's, not for  
one moment because I feel I am caught in any  
wrong doing, simply the first overt act conse-  
quent on surprise; but he tightens his grasp  
on it, holding it firmly in his. He, at any rate,  
has no mind to conceal our lover-like attitude.  
Why should he? The fact will soon be patent  
enough to all eyes; it is only forestalling  
events a little.

Michael driving so fast that he is almost  
on us ere we any of us know it reins in the  
mare at once, stopping beside us, and it is not  
until then—not until both he and Leila have  
had ample opportunity of observing that we  
have been hand in hand—that Colin releases  
my palm from his strong clasp.

Looking up at the two in the dogcart I know  
by their faces they have seen and in a measure  
understand the meaning. If ever features  
told tales, theirs do now. Michael's is ashen,  
and his eyes stare at me as if they would  
burn me up with inquiry, while Leila's mouth  
writhes in her endeavours to smile pleasantly,  
and look unconsciously amiably at Colin, as  
she says to him with forced expression,—

"Why, I thought you were going to Norwich  
to-day with Mr. and Miss Barlow?"

"So I originally intended; but you see I  
have changed my mind," he returns, with the  
faintest shade of provoking intent in his voice.  
"I'm glad I did not go; it would have been  
fearfully hot in dusty streets, and I have spent  
my time much more profitably," with a short  
laugh.

Michael absolutely glares at him as he says  
this, still with that pallor through his sunburnt  
face. I believe if he could run his bay mare  
over Colin, and annihilate him where he  
stands, he would with all the pleasure in life.  
However, he only flicks his whip, making the  
mare start, though he holds her well in, for  
Michael is a capital whip, and can manage  
horseflesh with the best of them.

"Have you and Celia been fishing?" in-  
quires Leila, with obvious effort.

"No, not fishing," says Colin, turning his  
smiling brown eyes on me, by his side.

"Of course not. How stupid of me to ask  
though, you haven't any rods and things. How  
did you amuse yourselves for a whole after-  
noon? Arguing, or discussing the political  
economy of the country?" and she darts a  
glance at me, as if she expected me to duly  
catalogue our doings from the moment of her  
departure until the present time for her special  
behalf and benefit.

However, I leave the onus of answering on  
Colin, who returns lightly,—

"No, Celia"—pointedly marking my Chris-  
tian name for Michael and her joint edifica-  
tion—"and I neither spent our afternoon in  
argument or comment on our country's political  
outlook, still we managed to amuse ourselves  
fairly well, I think. Didn't we?" to me.

I nod and say "Yes." Then Michael puts  
in his word for the first time since our re-  
contre.

"We must not keep the mare standing any  
longer, Leila, she's so hot; but if you'd like to  
get out and walk with Celia and Mr. Boughton  
up to the house, I'll take her round to the  
stables for a rub down at once."

"Oh! no, Michael, thank you," she answers sweetly, and the lips writhes in another strained smile. "I won't get out, now we're so close home; I'd rather remain where I am. Besides," with a rather spiteful intonation, and a vicious glance at me, which glides off me as water does off a duck's back, "I should feel so very *de trop*. Celia and Mr. Boughton might not want me. Oh, no, I won't get out. Are you coming in now?" to Colin. "Because, if not, I may as well say good-bye here," stretching out her little gloved hand over the side of the dog-cart.

"I'm on my way to the Rectory, Miss Neville, for that cup which cheers but not inebriates. I shall, probably, however, see you at Gable End this evening, as I am coming round to see Mr. Lascelles."

"Then it's only an *revolver*. Don't be late, I've bought a new dust at Bury to-day, and I want you to try it over with me. We always seem to sing so well together—I mean our voices harmonise so well," she calls out, turning her head back to say it, and waving her hand, as Michael starts the mare on her way, trying to keep up at least the semblance of a tender *entente* between Colin and herself, as if something beyond ordinary friendship's link bound them together.

Colin gives vent to a short laugh as the mare hurries onward, urged by the flick of Michael's whip.

"I think they both see how the land lays," he says, with a gleam of enjoyment in his brown eyes. "Why did you want to snatch your hand away like that, you little, naughty thing? Are you afraid of cousin Michael and Lella Neville? You needn't be. I won't let you be bullied, be sure of that. Black looks won't break any bones, that's one comfort. We can manage to support that, I rather fancy; and they can't prevent us loving one another, can they?"

"No," I answer, slowly, but I think how nearly Lella kept us apart, and but for that little silver talisman we might still have been playing at cross-purposes, and quite estranged. Then I add gravely, "I could not help loving you, Colin, even if I tried hard not to do so. I did try several days, but I found it was no use whatever. I was obliged to love you whether I liked it or not."

"But you did like," he says, gaily, "and so we are going to be very happy for the future—so happy, dearest. If the father says yes! I may have his sweet little daughter, why, there will not be one dark spot on our horizon, one gloomy thought to mar our love. No one can possibly harm us," and he takes my hand in his.

"Indeed, I trust not, Colin. I pray not, with all my heart," I answer, earnestly.

"Well, good-bye for the next hour or so. Lella asked me not to be late, didn't she?"—smiling—"so I won't. I have to 'banter' that dust with her, too, unless she declines my manly baritone this evening, when the time comes. I am afraid, my dearest little Celia, you have made an enemy of your friend to-day, and for that matter so have I. I am heartily sorry for your cousin, I must confess, but Miss Neville's 'we can both live and flourish under.' A *rivederci*, amine mia!" and waving the hand he holds in his moves away quickly down the Marling road, while I leisurely wend my way up the long path to the portals of my ancient home.

Now that Colin has left me, my hitherto thorough sense of security deserts me. Whilst he was within sight and sound I felt no atom of fear what "man could do unto me." But now the touch of his hand is gone, the sight of his brown eyes no longer near, I feel a fluttering sensation of boundless doubt as to how my news will be received. I know father will be all we could wish. He never crossed me in anything in my life, and I have so set my heart on Colin. But supposing, only suppose for one moment, if Aunt and Michael shall so work upon him as to make him think it is for my good Colin and I should say good-bye to each

other. Oh! I can't and won't think anything so horrible.

The house is very quiet as I enter it. The old oaken, brass-studded door always stands open, except when winter's chill blasts and feathery snowstorms come whirling about our old home. Only a stained glass swing-door keeps barricade against odd comers, and shuts away the sight of the garden from the big, marble-floored hall, remnant of the days when doubtless Gable End received finer company than it does now. I push through and pass down the hall, preparatory to going into father's sanctum to tell him my love-story, and prepare him for Colin's visit by-and-by, when a purring voice that I know so well calls out softly as I pass the dining-room door, which is half-open,—

"Celia! precious child! is that you?" "Yes, aunt. Do you want anything?" and I poke my head into the room, discovering aunt alone on the sofa, braiding a tea-cosy assiduously, with a heap of silks lying by her side.

"I thought it must be you, sweet! You are just in time to give me some advice as to which coloured silk I ought to use for this poppy I am outlining in."

I walk forward to the sofa, knowing perfectly well, as I do so, that aunt is already in possession of the fact noticeable to Michael and Lella, on our sudden meeting in the Marling-road, close to Gable End just now. Who her informant was, however, I cannot yet determine. That she knows it is a moral certainty in my mind; hence her demand for my advice on the subject of poppy red.

"Lella is a much better judge of crawl-working than I am, aunt," I say, taking up the bright bundle of parti-coloured embroidery silk; "she could tell you in a moment what shade you ought to use. Why don't you ask her?"

"Lella has excellent taste, I own, but so has my sweet Celia," nodding her head approvingly in my direction; "and Lella is upstairs in her room, dressing for tea. See and Michael have come back from Bury market, and she tells me, sweet pet, that when they turned round the Marling corner, and came upon you suddenly, you were actually walking along hand-in-hand with Mr. Boughton. I trust she was mistaken," carefully sorting out some faded green silks wrapped up in papers, neatness personified.

Ah! so it was Lella who told Aunt Rachel, was it?

"No aunt, she was not mistaken," I aver, outspokenly.

"Oh! my own pet! I am very, very sorry indeed to hear you say that," she goes on smoothly, "but I know that the dove is preparing its steel-tipped wings to flap in my face, despite the 'own pet,' and soft purr. You must remember you are no longer a wayward child, but almost a woman now, and it is not decorous to let a young man take your hand like that. Of course"—hastily seeing my intention of interruption—"precious love! I know you meant no harm, not in the slightest degree, and it was only a little illia fun on your part Mr. Boughton I am afraid I am unsatisfactory dirt, so Lella tells me; and she knows having met him before. You, or rather we, have known him so short a time, that he is really almost a stranger to us; if not quite. No, Celia sweet, I cannot allow you to be drawn into any silly, idle flirtation. It is not fair to my Michael," and her tone incessantly hardens towards the close of her sentence. I have an idea that she does not imagine it has gone so far between Colin and myself as it really has, only the budding promise of a love affair, which will ripen if allowed to remain unplucked. Hence she fondly believes she is effectually putting a spoke into our joint wheel, and nipping all incipient passion in the bud.

She has hitherto been so completely successful in keeping us apart, aided and abetted by Lella, that I experience quite a horrid pleasure in undeceiving her.

"I am going to marry Colin Boughton," I say bluntly, not softening the blow in the smallest degree, and watching aunt's face as I say it. It does not often happen to fall into my power to be able to checkmate my pursing relative. Reprisal even in any small form is always denied me, because aunt is always so very wary in her moves, so that it would not be in human nature to deny myself this horrid pleasureless, which I own to feeling at this precise moment; "that is why we were walking hand-in-hand. I can take my future husband's hand without any undue decorum, I am thankful to say."

Aunt's thin lips are a mere line as I convey this intelligence—a narrow line of acidity; and those eyes have their steadiest brilliancy as they gaze at me, standing by the sofa. For a moment I know she dares not speak; lest her tongue should refuse to purr, and obstinately pour forth torrents of invective against me and poor harmless Colin.

"Marry him!" she almost snarls out, like a cat preparing for the fray, forgetting in this supreme moment to "precious" or "own pet" or "sweet love" me; "why has he not got a penny to bless himself with?"

"But I have, you see aunt," I return somewhat cruelly, for I know aunt has had her grey eyes on all my mother's money which father holds in trust for me until he dies; then it is mine. She had planned it all so nicely for Michael and I—how he would eventually be master of Gable End, and she would virtually be mistress; and I—well, I should be probably a nonentity. True always said it, ending invariably with her sage advice, "Don't you hear him, Miss Celia," meaning Michael. "Or rather I shall have," I amend after a pause, during which aunt is fluttering her steel-wing preparatory to an onslaught. "Besides, Colin has his pay. We shall not be so very badly off, and I am not an extravagant girl!"

"No doubt your lover is fully aware that you are an heiress on a small scale—probably had your mother's will examined at Doctors' Commons before he found out he desired you for a wife," she remarks sarcastically. "I trust my dear brother-in-law may see the necessity of preserving you from any fortune-hunter's clutch"—with grim composure.

"At any rate, whenever I clutch I fall into it won't be Michael's, aunt," I affirm forcibly, besting a hearty retreat from the dining-room, and moving across the hall to father's sanctum, where I know he is to be found, probably pouring over some vellum-bound illuminated missal, or cataloguing his cameos, leaving aunt to chew the end of my final reflection as she best may. I see pretty plainly that she at least finds my news not according to her liking. I wonder whether I shall ever be "precious" or "own pet" again? And oh! I do wonder what Michael will say! Poor Michael! I know what love is now, and can sympathise. I told him once I had no heart. It is not true. I have one, but it beats alone for Colin. "Oh, Heaven!" I cry to myself fervently, "let nothing come between me and my love, I pray you." Then I knocked at my father's door.

Half an hour afterwards I rush upstairs in frantic haste to don my evening garments for tea, which is later to-night, having been put off until seven, on account of the journey to Bury. True stands by the window, waiting for my advent.

I dance up to her, and fling my arms round her dear old fat neck in its cotton frill.

"I am going to be married, True! What do you say to that?" I cry gleefully.

"Lawk-a-mo, dearie! now yew don't say so," she returns, doubtful as to whether I really mean it or not, for I have hitherto always steaturnally scouted the bare idea of marriage; that is, with Michael.

"Yes! I am going to marry Colin, Mr. Boughton, you know"—explanatory. "Oh! but he is such a darling, and I do love him so very, very much; and I gave her a hug as if she were Colin himself."



"Lawk a me!" she says again, in astonishment, when she gets time to breathe.

Lawk-a-me is Prue's favourite expression, employed on every available occasion, and expressive of varied emotions—spoken joyfully, sorrowfully, dismally, and sometimes, but rarely, grudgingly. On this occasion it conveys pleasurable excitement.

"There now," she goes on sagely, "I always did think him a right nice young gentleman, that I did. And he'd come into the dairy so pleasant like."

"When I was there, Prue," I added, laughing.

"With a right kind smile, and a good morning, Prudence; what splendid butter you do make; and its rare good butter I'll own," she ends meditatively.

"Of course it is. Everything you make is good, Prue," I say, complimentingly. "You shall be our cook, Colin's and mine, when we're married; and we'll have such dishes, and you shall use as much butter and cream for them as you like," I put in promisingly; for one of Prue's grievances against aunt has been the stinting of the above ingredients, necessary to the perfection of Prue's concoctions in the culinary line.

"Well! I'm right glad, Miss Collie, that I am," she returns, ignoring my tempting suggestions.

"So am I so glad. I don't know what to do with myself. He's coming to-night, and he shall come out into the kitchen and see you, Prue. Then you can wish us luck, can't you?"

"Yes! dearie, I'll do that; never fear. I'm right glad, right fair glad," she continues at intervals, *sotto voce*, during the progress of my dressing; and I perfectly agree with Prue.

## CHAPTER XI.

"How now, Malvollo?"

"Madam, you have done me wrong, Notorious wrong."

"Have I, Malvollo? No."

"Lady, you have. You must not now deny it."

Anna's love, while it brings so much happiness, should also bring pain. I have endured much unkind reproach in look, voice and gesture since the eventful evening a week back, when father came into the drawing-room with Collie, and announced him as my future husband, and his intended son-in-law; thus openly acknowledging us as affianced lovers.

I am certain that as soon as I had quitted aunt after informing her that I was going to marry Collie, as it were, with or without her permission, she had gone to Leila's room and narrated the circumstance, how grieved of course I do not know. At any rate, when we assembled at the festive tea-board later on, I noticed that Leila had been indulging in a weep, for her eyes were significantly red, and I felt very sorry, because it showed she must have cared a little, at any rate, for him. It was not pleasant tea by any means. Aunt's lips were still a pale thin stream, and she pointedly ignored me, addressing almost all her conversation to father and Leila. No mention, however, was made of my afternoon's amusement, and one would have imagined to hear my Aunt Rachel's flow of small talk on indifferent subjects that such a thing as annoyances and concealed wrath could never have existed under that purring exterior and feline sweetness.

Michael rarely spoke, and hardly lifted his eyes from the table-cloth. Once, being next him, I entered some commonplace, for the sake of saying something to rouse him from his apathy, but he lifted his head, and while answering me looked with such passionately reproachful eyes into mine, as if he, like ill-used Malvollo, would say, "Madam, you have done me wrong, notorious wrong," that a pain shot through my breast, and I shrank from any more speech with him. Oh! I do wish there were two Collie Lascelles; or that I had been born a twin, then he could have had one and Collie the other.

Father, if he noticed aught amiss, said nothing to mark his knowledge. I had confided to him the whole history of my love, and he knew Michael's attachment, though never by one word or sign had he endeavoured to balance my feeling in the matter. He wished me to choose for myself, as he had done before me, and been blessed with dear mother's heart.

However, tea at last came to an end, and very glad I was. Then we adjourned to the drawing-room, and father into his study; and I tried hard to read a book, and concentrate my thoughts upon what that book was about, but failed ignominiously, being in a state of fluttering anxiety as to when Collie would come. Finally the two walked into the room, and Collie's engagement began. Her path of true love! Was it to be smooth or rough, rose-scented or thorny, to finish well or ill, happily or sorrowfully? Ah! Are we not all in that old tyrant Time's hands, and he never tells us any of his secrets?

Aunt Leila and Michael made a pretence of congratulation, fair enough as far as words went, but to my alert ears watchful for everything antagonistic of a hollow sound, wanting in true ring.

There was, no doubt, for Leila said driving quickly through the air had made her head ache, she supposed. At any rate, it did ache for some reason or another, and to sing was impossible. So the newly-purchased song lay tranquilly on the top of the piano, and we were allowed no music to soothe "the savage breast" that evening. Collie did not remain long with us; possibly aunt made him feel her lack of warmth, and the general atmosphere was not enticing, though it was so to speak, the feast of our betrothal.

Father and I went to the door with him, after he had bade his adieux to the rest in the drawing-room, and I've no doubt they were precious glad to be rid of him if the truth be known. Father shook his head, and then went on to his sanctum, leaving us to say our first lover's good-night alone.

What an easy simple thing to say is a good-night! and how long it took us to say only the moon and ourselves saw.

"In her stony shade of dim and solitary loveliness, I'd learn the language of another world."

When I go back to the drawing room I find Leila, in sole possession of the old-fashioned chintzes, oval-framed mirrors and chippendale chairs, which our Lascelles ancestors have left behind them as relics of the past, and which we have never cared to deprive dear old Gable End of.

"Well," she began, as I entered, and walked up the room, to the stucco-carved chimney piece, here and there interlined with gilding, opposite which she reclined in a low chair; "Have you finished saying good-night to your lover?"

There was an aggressive inflection on the last word which irritated me.

"Yes," I returned, coldly; "Collie has gone."

"Don't you think now, Collie, that you have played a very underhand part—that you are a mean girl to take him from me?" she goes on, tilting her head on one side, and surveying me with looks of unfeigned wrath.

"You are speaking falsely, Leila," I answered, with dignity. "I have never for one moment tried to wane Collie's affection from you, and you know it."

"You have," she broke out, fiercely; "he was mine; we loved each other dearly once on a time, long before you ever saw him. He was the only man I ever cared two straws about, really."

"Then, if that be so," I put in, quietly, "it was a pity you did not keep him when it was in your power to do so, instead of flirting with his elder brother. Collie has told me the whole story; and be assured of this, that whatever he may have felt once on a time, as you say, you taught him the value of your heart. I gave you and he every opportunity of renewing the love you speak of. I purgessly held aloof,

imagining it might be that some lover's quarrel had separated you both, and that time might heal the sore. But he preferred to love me! I might justly reproach you, if I chose; for misleading him about Michael and I. I might, too, call that meanness, and I do not think anyone would call me far out."

"He would have come back to me," she whimpered out, "only you took care he should not. I cannot think why you want him; he isn't well off, and he won't have much when his father dies, because all that goes to his brother. Michael is your slave, adores the very ground you walk on; you might have been contented with him and left me Collie," and she dabbed at her eyes with her handkerchief.

"You are speaking at random, Leila. I should never have married Michael if not a single other man lived. Will you never understand that? As to Collie's being well off, I am not particular to a few pounds per annum, more or less."

"Well," she said, regarding me evenly. "I consider you've behaved shamefully all round—to Aunt Lascelles, Michael and I. I wish I had never come down to Gable End, that I do. But do not be so sure it will be all honey and roses, Miss Collie. You believe Collie is in love with you; he's in love with your money, if you like," pulling at the corner of her handkerchief.

"He bestows his affection on a very unsubstantial object then," I answered, with a little laugh and shrug. "At present, no one, in a sense, could be poorer than I am. Father will live years and years longer, I pray to Heaven, and the gold which you ascribe to Collie worships, instead of my unworthy self, we could neither of us touch until my beloved father joins dear mother above," I ended gravely.

"I don't care what you say," she went on violently; "he was mine, and you led him away from me. But you're not married yet, and there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip. You may find your precious lover not quite such a god as you imagine, and he may tire of blue eyes and a good complexion!"

"True," I assented, nonchalantly; "it may turn out so, but, in the meantime, we have not tired of each other yet. When we have found each other wearisome, and a bore, I will write and let you know. Come, Leila, do not be so foolish. I have no wish to quarrel, let us be friends," and I stretched out my hand; "you know we cannot both have Collie, can we?"

But she kept sullenly twisting her handkerchief, regardless of my peace overtures.

"You are not married yet," she muttered, getting up from her chair; and, passing over the tawdry carpet to the door, left me alone in my glory.

For a little time I lingered, wondering how it was that I appeared to be such a terrible girl—a *mauvaise sujet*, in fact—only because I loved Collie and he loved me. According to aunt and Leila I ought, properly speaking, to feel that I had committed some stupendous wrong, for which due atonement and repentance was necessary, only because I wanted to marry one man, and they wanted me to marry another. But the hardest part of that evening had yet to come. As I wended my way upstairs, and down the long corridor leading to my room, I passed Michael's door, which was ajar, and a light shining inside.

I stayed my steps, thinking I should like to say something to him ere I slept—to hear him answer that he at least bore me no grudge, no ill feeling—though, to tell you the truth, I have almost detested aunt, instinctively feeling her falseness in thought and speech. I have always liked Michael up to a certain degree; I would sooner hear his harsh voice than her smooth purr; and his love at least was sincere, though I did not want it. So I called, softly.

"Michael, are you there?"

There was no answer. I listened, but I heard no movement to indicate a living presence in the room. Then I said, again—

ushing open the door farther inward, and coking in,—

"Michael, are you there?"

He was there, but he made me no answer. Sitting against a spindle-legged black oak table, his arms stretched out over it, and his head lying hidden close against them, he either did not or would not hear me. I crossed the room to his side, and, laying one hand on his outstretched arm, I said once more,—

"Michael, I have come to say good-night to you."

He slowly raised his head, as if by the mightiest effort, and looked at me. Haggard, awarthy-featured, full of indescribable misery. I shrunk back. Had I done this? Was this expressed misery of my working?

"Oh! Michael don't look at me like that!" I said in a shocked tone.

"Why not?" he answered, harshly; "why must I not look at you like that? Would you have me pretend I am glad that you have thrown me away like an old glove needed no longer? Am I to counterfeit contentment, joy, that you are going to marry some other man than myself? I tell you now, that you have broken my heart."

"No, no, do not say that, Michael," I exclaimed, beseechingly, "I cannot bear it. If I had ever led you to believe differently than I always have done—if I had ever allowed you to imagine I loved you, you might justly say it of me. But you know I never did. Have I not always implored you not to think of me but as a cousin, jested with you, tried to laugh or provoke you out of it? Answer me truthfully, and you cannot deny it."

He fell on his knees before me, and took my hand in his.

"Celia!" he cried, raising his face full of despair to mine; "think well before you throw me away. Think well before you have a lost soul on your conscience. I know I am mad to-night, but it is the madness of my love for you. Give me your pity even, if it cannot be answering love, and take me to your heart instead of the man who would rob me of all I treasure in this world. I will be your faithful lover, your devoted slave henceforth. I swear it, as I kneel here, if you will only give me that pity which is akin to love, and send Colin Broughton away. He cannot love you as I do. You shall never regret your choice. I am offering you my soul, remember, the soul of a man who will live for you alone. By refusing you kill that soul for evermore. Oh! do not refuse. I implore you, entreat you, by all you hold sacred, not to refuse," clutching my hand to his breast, as if he would force me to give him a yea.

"Oh, Michael, I cannot do what you ask me," I returned, gently, full of infinite pity for his pain, for did I not know what love is myself?—and though it added sweetness to life in one case, it surely added bitterness in another. "I cannot, indeed I cannot. It is begging an impossibility. Would you have me turn traitor to my love, when you ask me to give Colin up? You tell me that you love me—would you then make me unhappy, wretched, miserable, all my life long? No, I am sure, when you think of it, you would not. If you are truly fond of me, your desire would be to see me happy. No, dear Michael, indeed I cannot do what you ask," I ended most sorrowfully.

"You kill me, remember," he said, bowing his head over my hand, and speaking in a suffocated voice; "morally, you condemn me to death—the death of hope and joy and happiness in this world. It will be one long dreary blank of a death in life."

"Hush! oh, pray hush, Michael; you do not know what you are saying. You cannot mean it, really. It is not true," I answered, falteringly.

"It is Heaven's truth, Celia," he returned, despairingly, lifting his swart, haggard face towards mine.

The next moment someone rustled across the room to us.

"You cruel, cruel girl!" hissed Aunt in a low voice of concentrated anger; glaring with

her steely eyes full at me—all her polished smoothness vanished; the soft purr fled—only the true snarling, feline woman alive in her now. "You wicked, miserable, cruel girl," she said, again; "is it not enough that you must take up with the first muling, puling, money-hunter you come across, and break my son's heart after all his years of devotion?—that you cannot leave him alone in his grief, but must needs come to gloat over his misery, and contemplate the wreck you have caused?"

I felt the utter injustice of aunt's condemnation. I certainly had not come to "gloat" over his misery, as she termed it. Far from it.

"Yes," she went on, in the same hissing tone. "Look at your work, gaze on it and be satisfied. Oh, you cruel, miserably heartless girl. Why do you kneel to her?" she said, addressing Michael. "Do you imagine prayers or supplications will avail you? She will laugh over what you cry to her lover to-morrow, be very sure. Bah! they will both live to rue their laugh. Let them laugh while they can; time may teach them another lesson. They are not married yet," she ended, with a sudden, snarling laugh, unconsciously repeating Leila's very words of a little earlier.

"You are wrong to speak to me like that, aunt," I said, indignantly, as Michael loosed my hand and rose to his feet.

"Wrong to let you hear the truth!" she continued, scoffingly. "Wrong to tell you of your heartlessness. Do you expect a caress for what you have done?—a kind word for throwing away my child's heart like a ball? Do you imagine I have put up with all your whims and fancies all these years for pure love of you? If you fancy this for one moment, let me tell you, you are egregiously wrong. It has been for Michael's sake, because he foolishly set his heart on you—solely and only for his sake. But, my young madam, you are not married yet," and she laughed slowly again.

"I neither deserve what you say, or is it just," I answered quickly.

"Mother, Celia is right; you forget—yourself," put in Michael, looking fixedly at her as he spoke.

For the moment I positively felt grateful to my cousin for taking my part. I began to think everyone but father and Colin seemed against me.

"I have nothing more to say then," said Aunt, relapsing into a voice and manner of ice-coldness, and moving closer to Michael's side. "You can go. I have finished. You can leave my son in peace with his mother, and be thankful he forgives you your wickedness. Though he sides with you I can pardon him, knowing his besotted dotage. Go, I say, you have broken his heart; there is nothing left for you to do now. Leave us in peace," and she deliberately turned her back on me, and began to smooth Michael's hair.

"You are very harsh, Aunt Rachel," I said, sadly, moving away to the door. There I lingered, hoping we might part better friends, for I would not feel enmity against her for her injustice, cruel as it was, knowing that she said truly, when she told me it was for Michael's sake.

"Are you not gone yet?" she asked icily, as I stood waiting. "What do you want? I told you I had nothing more to say; leave us. Good-night."

I went out, softly closing the door behind me, down the rest of the dim corridor, and so to my room.

Verily, my betrothal seemed to be set about with storms. The course of true love had not begun very smoothly, I thought, with inward dismay. But what mattered the beginning so long as the end was peace and happiness.

Oh, Fate, please, do please, make it smooth in the future, and let us be happy!

(To be continued.)

THEY that will not be counselled cannot be helped. If you do not hear reason, she will rap your knuckles.

## OPALS AND DIAMONDS.

—O—

### CHAPTER XIX—(continued).

TERENCE O'HARA went over to the piano, and declining the offer of the professional accompanist, sat down and accompanied himself. He had a fine voice, and the full rich notes struck on Maggie's ear with unpleasant familiarity. He had often sung at the Parsonage, but he never sang *there* as he sang here in the brilliant saloon, thronged with all the *crème de la crème* of London society. There was passion, pathos, regret, reproach in his tones, and every word of the song he sang fell with preternatural distinctness on the ear of the woman who listened, and knew that to her alone, of all that great crowd, were the words addressed, for she had jested with him in the old days, and told him that he would prove untrue.

"Do you remember how, in play,

You said that I would prove untrue,  
That men loved for a summer's day,  
But women ever, as would you?

Yet now alone I slowly pace,  
Along the shivering shining sand;  
Your eyes gaze on another's face,  
Another holds your willing hand.

Dear, you have cleft my heart in twain.

Why did you say that you would love  
As long as waves rolled o'er the main,  
And stars were fixed in heaven above?

Still shine the stars, waves rise and sink  
As on the night when last we met;  
Ah! could I but of Lethe drink,  
That I, as you do, might forget."

Forget! how she wished she could forget, root out of mind and memory all thought of him, all remembrance of those days when she fancied her girlish heart his, and had pledged her troth to him, and of that later time, when another coming showed her his mistake, and the bitter struggle had commenced between honour and love, ending in the victory of the latter.

She only wished to remember the happy time—all too short, alas!—since her marriage, those bright hours full of supreme content passed in the sunny south. That was not possible, of course, she told herself with fierce pain.

She had erred, and she must suffer for her error. How she wished, now, that she had trusted to the strength of Sir Lionel's affection for her, and told him all, despite Maud's counsel to the contrary. Had she done so she would have nothing to fear.

As it was—well as it was—she hardly knew what she dreaded, but she felt dimly that if her husband discovered she had deceived him that it would mar the perfectness of their lives—possibly part them; and she was also aware that this put her, to a certain extent, into the power of the man she had jilted.

"How shall I bear it?" she murmured to herself, clasping her little hands so tightly on the fan she carried that the delicate ivory sticks broke. "How can I bear those dreadful eyes on me, night after night—night after night, with their look of reproach and menace? It will kill me."

And it seemed likely to do so. As day after day went by she grew worn and haggard-looking. The soft cheeks lost their roundness, the orbit of the eyes hollowed, and purple shades were visible beneath them; the whole face sharpened, and the pretty mouth took a pathetic, wistful curve, while a line was faintly marked on the fair white brow.

Sir Lionel was a good deal occupied by business, and did not notice the change in her much, especially as she forced herself to appear gay in his presence; and Eunice, knowing she expected to be a mother in a few months, attributed her pale cheeks and languid ways to that, and, fortunately for Maggie, did not bore her with awkward questions. The only one who guessed the real cause of the sudden alternation in her looks was O'Hara, and he would give a sardonic smile as he noticed her start and quiver, when, in some crowded as-



suddenly, she would suddenly become conscious of his fixed gaze, and note with satisfaction every vestige of colour ebb to her tortured heart, leaving her face and lips white as the snowy gowns she almost always wore.

He seldom or never spoke to her, beyond the few words of greeting or farewell that politeness demanded, and he avoided even those when possible, but he haunted her like a shadow, and watched her unceasingly. No matter where she went, there was Terence O'Hara. If she drove in the park, she would see him leaning against the rails smoking a cigar; if she went to the opera, he was the first person on whom her eyes would light; if she spent an afternoon at Hurlingham, so did he; if she attended a fashionable fancy fair, she would meet him lounging about, giving half-crowns for cups of tea, and buying useless trifles—for the once impetuous artist was becoming rich, and orders were pouring in for portraits from all the beauties of the gay world—while he never missed being present at balls, dinners, or at homes where she was. He invariably paid great attention to Eunice, who was flattered by it, and fascinated by his winning manners; and Maggie watched the growing intimacy between the two with a great dread, and truly pitied the Comte, who sincerely loved her sister-in-law.

"I wonder why he pays her so much attention?" thought her ladyship, one day at a Chiswick garden-party, when O'Hara had been more than usually devoted. "He does not love her, I am sure. He cannot do that, for all the while he talks to her he looks at me. I wish I had courage to ask him to know what he means."

Maggie was sitting in a little vine-clad bower near the river, apart from the gay throng, who wearied her with their senseless chatter, and looking up she saw the object of her meditations sauntering by. It was a peculiar thing, but if Lady Molyneux separated herself from the crowd Terence invariably managed to discover her place of seclusion, and would disturb her rest and peace by entering the conservatory or boudoir, to which she had retired, with his partner, and commence talking, in audible tones about Inchfield and Wingfield, and the beauty of the surrounding country. On the occasion in question he was alone, and Maggie in a moment of desperate courage addressed him.

"Mr. O'Hara, I want to speak to you. Can you spare me a minute?"

"As many as Lady Molyneux wishes," he answered, with elaborate politeness, lifting his hat, and then he stood gazing at her pale face and down-drooped, long-lashed lids, with a queer look in his gleaming eyes.

"I wanted—to ask you—about my sister-in-law—Miss Molyneux," she faltered, after rather a long pause.

"Yes."

The monosyllable was not encouraging, but she went on, urged thereto by her desperate fears—

"You—pay—her a great deal of—attention."

"Yes."

"May—I ask to what—end?"

"Oh, certainly. I intend to marry her, if she will have me."

"Marry her! But—do you—love her?"

"By no means. I hate her."

"Then, why would you marry her?"

"For revenge!"

The words seemed to come from his lips like the hiss of a serpent.

"Why—would you take revenge—on—her?" asked Maggie, clasping her hands over her heart to still its wild throbbings. "She has not harmed you."

"No; but she is sister to the man who has—to the man who has ruined my life, robbed me of all that is fairest and best, wrecked my hopes, left each day a dreary blank. I can reach him through her, and I will do it. That shall be my first revenge."

"You—you—wouldn't do it," faltered the wretched woman before him, raising her eyes; but she shuddered as she did so.

His face was deadly pale, immovable, expressionless as a block of ice, save for the dreadful

yes that burned and blazed with murderous passion, showing that the volcano of injured feeling within was not extinct, as the chill, habitual atmosphere of reserve which he adopted might lead one to suppose.

"I would do it. Don't fancy I know what pity is. My life has been laid waste—I will ruin others."

"You shall not," she cried, with sudden courage. "I will warn Eunice."

"Do," he answered, with a sardonic laugh, "and I will tell Sir Lionel what a charming, truthful wife he has; and how do you think he will like that? To know that you were false to him as well as to me."

"No—no—no!" cried Maggie, springing up, and stretching out her hands imploringly.

"Not that—not that!"

"Keep silent, then," he rejoined, noting with keen enjoyment her terrible anguish, "or I'll manage to part you from him. You would suffer then—you suffer now! Am I not right?"

"You know I do," she gasped; "suffer cruelly!"

"Then you have your deserts," he said, coolly sauntering away over the soft, trim turf to the lawn; and Maggie sank back on the seat, covering her face with her hands, while great, tearless sobs shook her slender frame from head to foot.

"Maggie, are you ready to go back to Molyneux? I don't think I can let you stay in London any longer. You look quite ill, child," said her husband, the next day.

"I am quite ready, Li," she responded at once, only too glad at his mooted subject. "I shall be delighted to get back to the dear old Hall, away from the bustle, gaiety, and noise of town. I don't think I was meant for a fashionable society woman," she added, with a little wistful smile.

"No; you were only meant to be my darling," he rejoined, kissing her pale cheek. "I am glad that you don't mind coming back. And you, Eunice?" he continued, looking at his sister, "have you had enough gaiety?"

"Not quite," she answered, smilingly.

"But surely," he objected, "everything must be over now?"

"Very nearly. Still there is a concert at the Limmers' next Monday, and a dinner at the Trevors on Tuesday, which I should like to go to."

"Tuesday, that's a week off. What do you say, Maggie?"

"I—I—am sorry," she said hesitatingly, "to disappoint Eunice; but—I am not—feeling very well, and should be so glad to return home to-morrow, as you suggest."

"Very well, then, that settles it. You don't mind, Eunice?"

"Oh, no. I wouldn't keep Maggie in town on any consideration. We will go to-morrow."

Though Miss Molyneux spoke cheerfully she was secretly much disappointed, as she knew O'Hara would be at both places; but she was too unselfish to show it, and so they set off the next day, and arrived at the Hall just too late for the strawberries, and the dog-roses, and meadow-sweet, which was beginning to turn brown. But to compensate for this the travellers' joy crowned the hedges, the poppies and charlocks flaunted their gay blossoms on the hillsides and amid the corn, and the peaches were ripening against the high red walls of the kitchen-garden, and the hazel nuts were browning fast away in the leafy recesses of Inchfield Woods, and the Black Cap Mountain was a mass of bilberries and heather.

"I am glad to see your ladyship look so much better," remarked Brenshaw, one morning three weeks after their return, as she brushed out her lady's sunny tresses.

"Yes, I feel very much better. Quite strong again."

"Ay, my lady, there's nothing like fresh air and early hours, to bring you round after a town season. It's the quiet as does it, the gettin' to bed early."

"Quite so," agreed her mistress.

But it was hardly the fresh air and early

hours alone that had brought the colour back to Maggie's wan cheek, and some of the old sweet smiles to her lips. It was chiefly the escape from the espionage of a pair of much-dreaded eyes that had restored her health. She felt somewhat safe at Molyneux Hall.

Three weeks had passed without any sign of Terence, and she began to breathe more freely, to believe that for the present all danger was past. She was in high spirits all the morning, and stood on the terrace as Sir Lionel and Eunice mounted their horses for their usual afternoon ride, and waved her handkerchief and kissed her hands to them till they were out of sight; then getting a dainty little basket she strolled slowly to the rose-garden, and began to gather some of the choicest blooms.

She was arranging a great bunch of tea roses with Lord Raglan, when the sound of a foot-fall on the gravelled path made her look up, and in one minute her lately regained happiness and security vanished, for the man coming towards her was—Terence O'Hara.

The flowers dropped to the ground, her hands fell helplessly by her side, and she stood pale and speechless, gazing at her enemy.

"Charming occupation, my lady," he began sneeringly, "frivolous enough to please a frivolous woman. Ruralizing—rusticating—playing the Arcadian shepherdess, all simplicity, after the rôle of the London lady, all art and make-believe. Charming change. Don't you find it so?"

"How dare you?" she began, recovering herself a little as he stopped.

"How dare I? Ah! Allow me to explain. Miss Molyneux gave me a general invitation to call on her. I have been to the Rosary, she was not there, and I was told she was here. As I am to be such an intimate friend, in fact, one of the family, I took the liberty of walking across the park, and of introducing myself to your notice unannounced. Pray don't be offended. You know I am a privileged person."

"What—have—you—come for? Why have you followed me here?"

Her white quivering lips could hardly form the words.

"What have I come for? Need you ask?"

"Yes. What—do—you—want?"

"My revenge?"

He didn't raise his voice, only pronounced the words in his usual well-bred tones, but they sounded like the knell of fate to the wretched woman before him, and with one gasping sigh she fell at his feet senseless.

"Rather awkward this," he muttered. "What shall I do? Wonder if they can see from the house?"

He gave a quick look round, but the terraces rising one above the other, and the thick shrubbery that surrounded the rose-garden hid them from sight, and seeing that, he stooped, and took his first revenge, pressing his mouth to the lips that were Lionel Molyneux's, in a long passionate kiss, that thrilled him to the heart's core, making his pulses beat fiercely, and waking old longings within his breast.

"How lovely you are!" he muttered, looking down at the face pillowed on his arm. "How lovely, and how false! False as the sirens of olden days, who sang the sailors down the Rhine Falls, luring them to their fate. You lured me to mine, but you shall pay for it dearly," and again he stooped his head and kissed her with a savage fury, such kisses that Maggie would rather have died, had she known, than have borne the shame of them; then he laid her back, with her head among the scattered roses, and went away as he came, unseen by any one.

"Where is your mistress?" inquired Sir Lionel, when he returned with Eunice.

"My lady went to the rose-garden, sir, two hours back, and I have not seen her since," replied Brenshaw.

"Ah! Then I shall find her there."

And he did, but not as he expected. At first he thought she was dead when he found her lying there, cold, still pulseless, and

gathering the slight form in his arms he ran to the house, crying as he went, "My love, my darling, Heaven save you and give you back to me."

"Lionel, what is it?" ejaculated Eunice, as she met him at the door.

"She is dead," he answered, in despairing tones.

"Dead! No—no—don't say that. It is a fainting fit. Carry her up to her room, we will get her to bed, and send off one of the grooms at once for a doctor."

Tenderly the young man carried up his dearly-loved burden and laid it on a couch, while Brenshaw and his sister unrobed the senseless figure, and did all they could to restore consciousness, but in vain.

She remained insensible till about midnight, when her child was born, and then the whole household knew that her life trembled in the balance, and that the great London doctor, who had been telegraphed for in such haste, had announced that he thought there was very little hope, as the patient was so weak; and when the tiny boy baby, who had come into the world in such a premature fashion, was brought to Sir Lionel he turned from it with a gesture of repugnance, deeming that it ought cost the life of the mother, who was so very much dearer to him than any child could ever be.

## CHAPTER XX.

"HE DOES NOT LOVE YOU."

Between the hours of the next day wore away to the inmates of Molyneux Hall. Every minute they expected to hear that Maggie was sinking, and the Dowager Lady Molyneux, who had come over from the Rosary on receipt of the news, was nearly beside herself with fear, lest the anguish her son was experiencing should affect his brain.

Restlessly he paced to and fro, to and fro, along the great hall, or outside his wife's room. He neither ate nor drank, and seldom spoke, unless a direct question was addressed to him. His face was ghastly pale, and his dark eyes had quite a wild light in them, awful to see.

"Heaven grant she recovers," murmured the Dowager distractedly to Mr. Randal, whose grief for his favorite child, though quiet, was nevertheless deep and sincere.

"Heaven grant he may." These matters are in hands greater than ours. We can but bow to the will of the Almighty, and say, 'They will be done.'"

"Yes, yes. Still it is so hard to part with our dear ones. If she dies I shall lose my boy too. He will go mad, and be lost to me. Hark! how he is striding up and down, up and down! Go and try to comfort him, will you?"

Silently the Rector went out, but when he saw the awful despair on the young man's face he forbore to speak, knowing that for such grief there was no comfort, and paced along beside him in silence.

Another day dragged its slow length—another, and yet another—and then there was a faint murmur of hope, which grew stronger and stronger, and at the end of a week the news went through the house that Maggie would live. Great were the rejoicings at this intelligence. Sir Lionel was wild with joy, and his mother also, while Eunice and the Rector heard it with deepest thankfulness, which gave little outward sign. Still, though she was out of immediate danger, she was very weak, hardly able to lift the little hands from the satin coverlet, or return the fond kisses her husband pressed on her lips, when he was allowed to see her. Something retarded her recovery, the doctors could not tell what, but they did not know of her secret trouble, and it was by very slow degrees that she crept back to health and strength.

The first time Sir Lionel went in to see her, as he bent over her, he saw her lips move and just caught the words, "Do you love me still?"

"Love you!" he had cried passionately; "love you! a thousand times more than I ever have before! Is there not a new tie, a new link between us, that will bind our hearts closer together?" and she, at his words, had sunk back on her pillows, with a look of rest in her violet eyes.

It was long before she could leave her bed; and she would lie for hours, her head resting on his shoulder, with her baby lying on her breast, within the circle of her arm, content and happy. At first she was sorry it was a boy, as she knew it might inherit the curse of the family, and wished she had not had a child at all; but after a time all the wonderful mother-love that lies dormant in every true woman's heart woke, and she simply grew to worship the tiny little fellow, who, unlike the ordinary run of babies, never cried or screamed, and was invariably quiet and silent, with a gravity beyond not his years, but his days.

At last she was pronounced strong enough to get up, and was brought down to the blue boudoir, as it was the faintest, cheeriest room in the Hall, and put on the couch, propped up with a heap of downy pillows.

"Here are your letters," said Eunice, bringing in a great bundle. "The doctor says you may read them now. I don't fancy any of them are of much account, save three which are from your sisters. Will you read them now?"

"Yes," and Lady Molyneux took them, first glancing at the greater part, which were invitations and bills, skimming through Laura's, which contained a long account of how beneficial the beef-tea and bibles had proved to the benighted blacks; and Kate's, which was full of hopes for her speedy recovery, and regrets at not being able to come and see her, as Mr. Thornton had been thrown from his horse and had broken his collar-bone; reading Maud's carefully and slowly, for she had written to the latter on her return from town, and told her all about O'Hara, his threats and intentions towards Eunice, and asked for advice.

"Tell Eunice all," ran the letter, "for her brother's sake she will hold her peace and say nothing. Heaven alone knows what may happen if he marries her and uses her, and Sir Lionel may come in contact—as enemies, I mean—and that would be fatal to your happiness. She, of course, must be judicious in the way she dismisses him; in order to let him think that the dismissal originates with herself, and that no one else has anything to do with it, or it may make him furious. If she exercises a little tact—and she has plenty of that useful commodity—she can send him off without any difficulty. I only wish I could come to England now, but of course it is not possible. I can't leave aunt. It is a mere question of a month or two with her. She is wasting away, and won't see Christmas, the doctors say. I am heartily sick of Florence, though I have managed to see most of the wonderful sights, and shall be glad to get away from it. I heard from Clifford this morning. He is coming to England next January—six months' leave, special—and wants me to marry him then. That must naturally depend on circumstances. How is father? Does the curate business still answer well, and does the curate's old woman look after him in a manner satisfactory to herself and everyone else. Write and tell me all the news when you are able. What is my small nephew like? He ought to be pretty with such a mother.—Ever your affectionate sister, MAUD."

"Tell all." Yes, it was very well for Maud to say that, not so pleasant for Maggie to act on it. Still it must be done, and with a look at the little bundle of cambric and lace on her lap to give her courage, she opened the ball and began,—

"Eunice."

"Yes, my dear."

"Has—has—Mr. O'Hara—has—he—you seen him lately?"

"Yes."

"Has—has he been here?"

"He called twice while you were ill, and left his card."

"Has he—been to—the Rosary much?"

"He has called several times."

"And have you seen him each time?"

"No, I was here with you on several occasions, so missed the pleasure."

"Is—is it a pleasure to you to see him?"

"Yes, I think it is," replied Miss Molyneux, slowly. "He is very fascinating—very handsome, and then quite famous, you know."

"Is it the fame you care about, or do you really like him?"

"Well, really I hardly know. A little of both, perhaps. But why do you ask? Why do you make all these inquiries?" and the speaker lifted her head and fixed her brown eyes on her companion's face.

"Because I want to know if there is any chance of your—your marrying him?" Maggie brought the last words out with a desperate jerk.

"Perhaps there is," replied Eunice, softly, blushing slightly, "if he asks me."

"You think he will ask you?"

"Well, a woman never knows what a man really means until he says in so many words 'will you marry me?' Still I think, from what he has said, and the general tenor of his conduct, that he will do so."

"And if he does you must say no to him Eunice."

"Why?"

"Because he does not love you."

"How do you know?"

Miss Molyneux's voice was sharp and curt, and an angry flush overspread her face, to the roots of her soft dark hair.

"I know it only too well."

"How?"

"He told me so himself."

"Told you?"

"Yes. He was—I engaged—my lover;" and then, with many a falter and many a blush, Maggie told the whole story, and her companion listened with averted head and closely-clasped hands.

"You should have told Lionel. You should not have deceived him," said Eunice, rather coldly, when the story was finished.

"I know I ought," assented her ladyship, pitiously; "but I loved him so, I decided to lose his affection."

Even then she was true to the core, and to save herself would not put the blame on that sister who had so wrongly counselled her.

"Still, it would have been better to have kept nothing from him; you would have been happier now."

"True. I am wiser now, and would act differently; then I thought I was doing what was best, and—and—Eunice, you won't tell him—you will keep my secret?"

"Of course."

"And—you—don't mind—very much?"

"I don't think I shall mind at all after a little while, after he has proposed and I have sent him away, so don't worry yourself. I will be 'judicious,' as Maud says, in my 'nay,' and all will be well," and kissing the invalid's pale cheek as a sign of forgiveness, Miss Molyneux went to her own room; to "chew the cud of sweet and bitter fancies," and the bitter predominated for a time, until she thoroughly examined her feelings, and found that, after all, it was only her fancy and not her affections that had been snared by the blue-eyed Irishman's fascinations; and a few days later when O'Hara called she was so wise and charming, and so, to him, incomprehensible, that he felt quite baffled, and did not propose as he had intended to, but put it off until another time, and she was relieved, and hoped she might escape altogether.

That hope was vain, however; for one day early in November, as she strolled in the garden, where great heaps of sodden, dun-coloured leaves lay under the bare trees, and the bare foliage yet clinging to the dripping boughs would ever and anon come rattling down in showers as the wood-pigeons or field-



fares fluttered overhead, winging their flight to the open, her would-be lover joined her, and she knew from the look on his face and the light in his eyes that he meant to speak whether she liked it or no, and that there was no escape for her.

So, after remarking on the millinery of the weather and the beauty of the giant oaks, still well furnished with greenery, whose lower limbs were thickly draped in soft velvety moss, she paused, and gave him the opportunity he sought, which he was not slow to seize.

Eloquently he pleaded his case, with an amazing amount of tenderness and feeling, considering that he hated the woman beside him, and only looked on her as an instrument to help him to his coveted revenge.

Attentively Miss Molyneux listened to it all, and when he stopped, expecting her to speak, she gently declined his offer, telling him that she never dreamt he really meant to honour her by asking her to be his wife, that she had thought it was nothing but friendship he had to give, and assuring him that her affections had long since been given to another—which was the truth, for now that her eyes were opened, Eunice realised that her heart really belonged to the Comte, whom she had known since childhood, and whose steady, devoted affection she was beginning to value at its true worth, and to return in kind—and that she could never be anything more to him than a friend, and that she regretted exceedingly if her admiration for his talent, and the pleasure she took in his society, had misled him into thinking she entertained a warmer feeling for him.

O'Hara was rather astonished at her words, as he had been flattering himself that she was hopelessly in love with him, and would prove an easy prey; and it struck him at once that Maggie must have warned her and put her on her guard, and with great tact and skill he tried to discover if this were the case. But with a skill that equalled, if it did not surpass his own, Eunice parried his questions, showing plainly that she possessed the tact Maude attributed to her, and gave him the idea that her sister-in-law had not spoken to her about him, and that the refusal was the result solely of her affections being pre-occupied.

The Irishman was clever, yet he was no match for the well-bred, self-possessed woman at his side, who knew but too well how much depended on her mode of refusing him, and who, besides, was piqued to see small extent by the knowledge that he had sought to make himself a wife from a very base motive, and who, therefore, exerted herself to the utmost to show most in his eyes, and baffled him, and she succeeded marvellously well.

"I hope this will make no difference to our friendship?" she said, kindly, as he prepared to take his leave.

"I hope not," he rejoined, knowing that it would not do to quarrel with her, and he departed from entering Molyneux Hall as a well-wisher.

"You will come and see us very often, both here and at the Rosary, I trust. My brother and Lady Molyneux will always be extremely glad to see you."

She knew that it was politic to say this, though she hated herself for the hypocrisy.

"I shall do so with great pleasure," he answered, readily, "when I return from abroad."

"Are you going away, then?"

"Yes. The Princess Saltykoff has sent for me to paint her portrait. As it is an honour I cannot refuse, I shall have to start for Russia within the month."

"A long journey."

"It is, indeed. I hoped it would have been shortened and sweetened by your companionship," he added, infusing a vast amount of spurious tenderness into his voice.

"Did you, really?" stammered his companion, blushing, and wishing devoutly that he would go, as the tender speeches and amorous glances that accompanied them were slightly

embarrassing and excessively wearisome to her.

"I did, most truly. That hope, however, like a good many others I have indulged in, has flown."

"Will you be away long?" she queried, thinking what a relief his absence would be to Maggie.

"Six months, at least. Her Highness intends to give me five hundred guineas for limning her fair face, and that will be sure to bring me to many commissions from other wealthy Muscovite beauties, so I shall have plenty to do to occupy that time, though now that you have refused me my interest in trying to make a princely fortune will be nil. I shall have nothing to work for, no incentive to try and gain fame and wealth."

Miss Molyneux made no response to this outburst of simulated feeling; she felt she had better not, as she longed to tell him that she knew he hated her, and that she loathed and despised him, but she held the happiness of her brother too dear, so kept silent.

"Is there no chance for me in the future? Is my suit quite hopeless?" he asked, after a pause.

"Quite," she answered, firmly.

"I can never be anything more than a friend?"

"Never."

"Well, I shall claim that privilege in the future when I return, as I cannot hope for more. And now good-bye. As I must go alone I shall start at once for Russia, so will you make my adieu to Sir Lionel and Lady Molyneux, as I shall be unable to call on them again at present?"

"With pleasure. Good-bye."

"I hope you may never be able to call on them again," muttered Eunice, as she watched him striding away down the avenue, under the bare branches of the leafless trees.

"Balked!" savagely ejaculated O'Hara, as he strode rapidly through the dead leaves, that rustled under his tread, and flew before him on their frayed edges. "Balked this time. That confounded French Count in the way. I don't think from the manner in which she refused me, that Maggie has spoken. If I did think so," for a moment he stopped, and clenched his hands significantly. "But go; she knew nothing. I must try some other way. Molyneux himself must be the victim. Qaer, those rumours I have heard. Must visit the Dowry House before I leave; try to get some of the scruples of the old hag there, and open the doors by a golden key, see for myself if they are true. If so, my revenge is there, close to hand, and dried, and will be better—far better, than dragging that dark-eyed vixen, his sister, through foreign courts, neglecting and abusing her. That would only have been a sort of second-hand pleasure to me; but to see him writhing under torture—physical or mental—to know that he is wretched—forsaken—hopeless as myself, or more so—that will gratify my craving for revenge—my longing to bring him down to my level—to crush out of his life all light and happiness. Heaven! how I hate them!" And, with an awful laugh, he went on rapidly towards Inchfield.

"I suppose I had better tell Maggie," reflected Miss Molyneux, as she went slowly towards the house; "it will be a weight off her mind to know that he is gone for six months certain."

And, having arrived at that conclusion, she went straight to the blue boudoir, where her sister-in-law was sitting before a fire heaped high with coal, her little son on her lap, and a dainty afternoon tea service on a table at her side.

Very different the charming room looked to the sodden, damp garden. It was a pleasant contrast to any one coming in from it. The curtains were drawn, keeping out the keen wind that was beginning to bluster and howl round the old house; a large lamp, shaded by a pink cover, threw a rosy glow over the filmy lace and round tables, with their costly nick-

nacks, and the satin draperies. In one corner swung a scarlet-winged lory, in the ring hanging from the top of his cage; on the hearth-rug nodded little Jacko; while Rufus pillowed his great head on the marble fender, and stared steadily at the glowing embers.

"You are comfortable in here," remarked Eunice, as she tossed off her furs, and knelt before the crackling, blazing fire, warming her shivering fingers.

"Yes, very," agreed Maggie, as she handed her a clay crown Derby cup full of fragrant tea.

"You were wise not to go out to-day."

"Why? Is it very unpleasant?"

"I found it extremely so."

"Was it raining?"

"No; neither was it blowing. The wind has only just risen."

"What made it unpleasant, then?"

"The people who were about."

"What do you mean, Eunice?"

Maggie's face and manner were full of unconcealed anxiety.

"Mr. O'Hara was in the rose-garden."

"Eunice!"

"Yes; and he proposed to me."

"And you—"

"I refused him."

"What! What! did he say?" gasped Maggie white as ashes, and trembling violently.

"Not very much."

"Did he take—your refusal—quietly?"

"Yes. Much more so than I thought he would."

"Did he—suspect that I had—warned you?"

"No, I took good care that he should not."

I gave him to understand that my affections were already engaged; had been, in fact, for a long time. After telling him that I suppose I shall have to marry the Comte, to show that I really meant what I said."

"And will you mind doing that?" asked her companion eagerly, bending forward to look into her face.

"No, I think I shall not mind—now—much," responded Eunice quietly, a tender smile curving her full red lips, as she gazed dreamily into the fire.

"I am so glad," ejaculated Lady Molyneux, with a sigh of relief. "M. de Villedieu loves you so truly, and will, I'm sure, make such an excellent husband."

"Yes, I think he will."

"By the way, I have not told you my best news," she went on in a misgiving.

"What is that?"

"Our *déte noire* is going away."

"Going away!"

"Yes."

"Where to?"

"Russia."

"For long?"

"Six months."

"Thank Heaven!"

Maggie breathed the words most devoutly.

"You are glad?"

"More than glad. I feel as though a weight had been lifted off my heart, a cloud that shadows every joy and darkens every hour blown away. I can be happy now for awhile."

"Yes, enjoy the present, and don't think of the future. Sufficient for the day, &c. You will write to Maude, and tell her that I have judiciously declined the offer of his hand and heart?"

"Yes."

"When do you think she will be back?"

"Before very long now. In her letter of yesterday she said aunt could not last another fortnight, and that as soon as she had settled affairs she would return."

"Then we shall see her before very long."

"I think so."

## CHAPTER XXI.

CHRISTMAS AT MOLYNEUX HALL.

"TELEGRAM, my lady," said Peyton, one morning about a month later, as he held out a silver salver on which lay a yellow envelope.



["I HOPE YOU MAY NEVER BE ABLE TO CALL ON THEM AGAIN," MUTTERED EUNICE, AS HE STRODE AWAY.]

"From Maud," said Maggie, after scanning it hastily. "Poor Aunt died yesterday, very peacefully and quietly. She says we are to expect her next Wednesday. She is going to the Parsonage, to join papa, and wonders if Mrs. Truelove will be put out at her sudden arrival."

"Would you like to ask her here?" suggested Sir Lionel.

"May I?" cried his wife eagerly.

"May you? Why, of course, my love; this house is yours, and you can invite whom you like to it."

How good you are, Li," she ejaculated, going over to him, and nestling her cheek against his.

"Why good?"

"Because you are always doing something to please me."

"But pleasing you is the greatest pleasure of my life; so you see, after all, I am nothing but a very selfish fellow."

Don't say that. You are the dearest, best, kindest of—"

"Oh, come, I must stop this. You will make me conceited," and catching her in his arms he closed her willing lips with a kiss, tender and loving as ever man gave to woman, while Maggie clung to him in that half-timid, wholly fond way, which was one of her chief charms in his eyes.

"Well, how are you?" queried Maud, the following Wednesday, when she had thrown off her travelling wraps, and was sitting with her sister in the boudoir, partaking of "the cup that cheers, but not inebriates."

"Very well. Don't I look so?"

"You do, indeed. Quite blooming and matronly. Eight months have made a great difference in you."

"Have they? And how are you?"

"Well, as I always am, thanks. Where is my nephew?"

"In the nursery. Do you want to see him?"

"Of course. I am dying to criticise him."

"Don't die, then. I will send for him. I never inflict him on any one till they ask to be inflicted."

"You are quite right. It is disgusting to see the way in which some women pester people with their bantlings, exhibiting them to every visitor and casual caller as though they were rarities, seen only once in a lifetime."

"Quite so. Now, what do you think of little Jack?" she continued, as the nurse brought in her child, and she held him up for inspection.

"He is a dear little fellow," responded Maud, taking him in her arms.

"You are very lucky, as I've told you before."

"I know I am. I should be perfectly happy, perfectly content, save for one thing."

"But he has gone away, you wrote me."

"Yes; only for six months though. He will come back."

"He may not."

"Ah! I am sure he will. He told me he would have revenge, and I know but too well that he will keep his word."

"Let us hope not, and we will change the subject," said Maud, lightly, not caring to pursue it, as it was distasteful to her.

"What shall we talk about?" asked Lady Molyneux.

"Well, aunt—the pleasant part, not the unpleasant. I told you all about the poor soul's death in my letter of Monday?"

"Yes."

"Now I'll tell you how she has left her money. You, I, Laura, and Kate have four hundred a-year, Dad two, and the other twelve hundred goes to found a charity for coddling and keeping old women over sixty."

"I wish she had found some more deserving object than myself," said Maggie. "I have so much already, I don't want any more."

"Pooh! Four hundred a-year will be a nice little sum for pocket-money. I shall not find it too much."

"I daresay not, and it will be a great thing for father, Laura, and Kate."

"Yes. She might have left him the same as

she left us. A thousand a-year would have been ample for the old crones to find them in tea and snuff and flannel bandages."

"It was very good of her to leave it us at all. I hardly expected she would."

"Nor I, until just lately. I thought she might, but I knew she might not, so I suppose I must be thankful."

"You ought to be."

"Then I am what I ought to be for once, in a way. I don't know what I should have done without it with regard to my trousseau."

"I would have helped you, of course."

"Thanks. You and Li are very good, still I don't care to ride a willing horse to death, and he might not care to pay all my milliner's bills."

"I don't think he would mind. You know he owes you a vast debt of gratitude for smoothing matters over with Dad, and getting him to consent to our marriage."

"That was nothing," rejoined Maud, hastily, turning her head away to hide the deep blush that rose to her cheek, as she thought of the base motive that had prompted her to intercede for them with Mr. Randal. "Nothing at all. He oughtn't to think about it."

"He does think about it, and always will. I am sure he would do anything for you."

"He is very good. I don't think I shall ask him to do anything very much out of the common. Still, there is one thing I should like with regard to my marriage."

"What is that?"

"I should like to be married from here, as you were, and to have the breakfast here. Do you think he would let me?"

"I am sure he would. He will be delighted to do anything to please you."

"Will you speak to him about it, then?"

"Yes. To-morrow." "Thanks."

And then Maud sat silent for some time, watching the flames as they leapt and blazed up the wide chimney, and building her castles in the air.

(To be continued.)





[A LOVING WELCOME.]

NOVELLITE.

## A SAD SCAPEGRACE.

## CHAPTER I.

"TAKE your boots off before going upstairs. Mither Dick, like a dear, good young gentleman, and creep as quietly as a mouse by the master's door, or I'll be aither gettin' me wages in the winder to-morrow morning if he finds that I've let ye in against his particular orders. Oh! sure, why can't ye be for comin' home in decent time, like your brother, instead of staying out till wan o'clock, and getting a poor body into a scrape, because she never could learn to say no to ye?"

The speaker was a stout, good-looking Irishwoman, and her whispered remonstrance was addressed to a tall, slim young fellow, in a light suit. The latter's mobile face, fair hair and moustache, and handsome, mirthful grey eyes were dimly revealed by the candle that flared and guttered upon the hall table.

"All right, Molly," he remarked soothingly, "I'll glide past the governor's door like a ghost; I won't get you into any trouble. It's an awful shame, though, that he won't let me have a latch-key of my own."

"In that case you'd come home with the milk," said Molly severely. "Get away upstairs now, and if it's a bite or a sup ye're wanting there's a decanter half full of sherry and some sangwiches in the cupboard beside the fireplace. I put 'em there meself, hours ago."

"Molly, you're a jewel!" exclaimed the late one gratefully, as he went up the staircase, boots in hand.

"Sure and hadn't I ought to be, seeing that I came from the Emerald Isle?" related Molly, with true Irish wit, standing at the foot of the staircase, and holding the candle high above her head to throw a light upon his path, and prevent him from stumbling and raising an alarm at the same time.

Dick Hamilton got on very well till he reached the third story. There Molly's candle and his own good luck alike deserted him. One of the boots he was carrying suddenly slipped from his grasp, and fell upon the landing with a crash and re-echoed through the quiet house in the stillness of the night.

"Just my luck," he muttered as he stooped to pick up the boot before beating a quick retreat. But the noise had been heard by the very one he wished to avoid disturbing. A bed-room door flew open and a stern-looking old man suddenly confronted the culprit.

"What is the meaning of this, sir?" he demanded angrily. "I have told you more than once that I will not allow you to return to my house at such disgraceful hours. You seem to take a delight in disobeying me. One of the servants must have admitted you, since you have no latch-key, and for that act of disobedience on their part I shall take care to have them discharged. You are at liberty to go to your room now. To-morrow morning we must come to an understanding with each other. I cannot and will not tolerate your irregular conduct any longer."

"But, Uncle John—"

"Go to your room, I have nothing more to say to you at present," was the reply, as the owner of the grey dressing-gown re-entered his room and closed the door after him with a bang.

"I've done it now, and no mistake," reflected Dick, when he had reached his own room and devoured several of Molly's "sang-wiches."

"I expect there'll be an awful lecture in store for me at breakfast-time. I'll shield poor Molly, at any rate; she shan't lose her place through my clumsiness in dropping that confounded boot. If Walter and Uncle John were not quite so strait-laced in their notions, a fellow wouldn't be driven to adopt such tactics when he has gone in only for a little harmless amusement."

When Dick entered the breakfast-room at

nine o'clock his elder brother, Walter Hamilton, who had already breakfasted, was reading the *Times* for the usual ten minutes before going to business. A nod was exchanged between them, and then Dick made a descent upon the ham and eggs, quite aware that some extra tinge of stiffness marked his brother's never very cordial manner towards him.

There was hardly any personal likeness to be traced between the two men. Walter Hamilton was only of average height, with dark hair and eyes, small regular features, and mutton-chop whiskers. He had the neat, formal good looks that frequently betoken a well-regulated practical nature, somewhat narrow, perhaps, and quite devoid of imagination, or the least yearning for anything out of the beaten track.

From the time when old John Hamilton, the universal provider, whose great warehouses rivalled those of Whiteley and Shoolbred, had adopted his dead brother's sons and sent them to Eton, Walter had always been the good boy and Dick the scapegrace. Walter, by his persevering blameless conduct and aptitude for study, had won golden opinions from all his masters, while Dick had lived in a chronic state of disgrace and punishment. Not that he had ever been known to do a mean or a cruel thing; indeed, the weak and the helpless found a protector and a champion in Dick. But his love of mischief had always induced him to take the lead in any wild freak or practical joke that happened to be going, while he accepted the subsequent flogging in proud silence, without a groan or a murmur.

Later on Walter Hamilton had become his uncle's right hand in the management of the vast business, in which he already held a share.

Dick, who had not made up his mind as to the profession he should adopt, went in largely for pleasure. His uncle required him to do some office work each day from ten till four, but Dick's desk and stool were frequently without an occupant. His sworn allies, the

clerks, were always willing to do his work for him, and prevent him from getting into a scrape with the two principals.

It was not the least annoyance old John Hamilton had to bear in connection with his younger nephew to see him, in spite of his many failings, such a general favourite.

"Going to work already, old man?" said Dick, as Walter rose from his seat and began to draw on his gloves. "What a sober, plodding individual you are! If you don't look out you'll grow old without having known what it is to be young."

"I don't burn the candle at both ends and give myself up to idle and expensive amusements," was the cold reply. "Business and pleasure afterwards in my motto, Dick. Perhaps it would be as well if you were to adopt it on your own account."

"I couldn't grind as you do if my life depended on it," said Dick dogmatically. "I should have brain fever before the first week was over."

"Don't be alarmed; there can be no effect without a cause," said the other drily.

"That's a neat way of telling me that I am quite without brains," replied Dick, good-naturedly. "Well, if it's only what one might expect from a brother, and since you've got my share as well as your own, you can hardly complain."

"Uncle John is very much annoyed with you for coming home at such unreasonable hours," continued Walter.

Having few failings or temptations of his own, he was apt to judge his brother rather harshly.

"Take my advice, and be more cautious for the future, as things will go very wrong indeed with you. If you provoke him much more he will throw you over altogether, and I cannot always be interceding for you."

"I think I'll make for the office at once," reflected Dick, as the door closed behind his brother; "the old gentleman can't bully me before the other fellows, and I shall escape for the present. I wonder—"

But his wonder was cut short by the entrance of his uncle, who had risen earlier than usual in order to intercept his erring nephew.

"Which servant let you in last night?" the stern iron grey man inquired briefly, without condescending to notice Dick's "good-morning."

"I don't wish to annoy you, uncle, but at the same time, I'd rather not say," replied that young man, hesitantly. "Since I asked them to wait up for me the fault was really mine, and it would not be fair to punish them for it. If I can't have a latch-key I must come home earlier, that's all. I promise you it shall not happen again."

Previous experience having proved to John Hamilton the impossibility of extracting any information from Dick against his will, he allowed the subject to drop for the time being.

"Mind that it does not happen again," he said impressively. "Now listen to what I am about to say, nephew Richard, and do as you like afterwards. I have paid your debts and put up with your irregular conduct and confirmed idleness for a long while, but my patience is nearly exhausted. Forbearance beyond a certain point becomes mere weakness. I will have no drone bees in my hive, and I have not worked hard for you to spend the money I have amassed in reckless dissipation. You will make up your mind as to the profession you wish to adopt within the next three months, and I will advance the necessary funds. Meanwhile, if any more bad debts, or any further escapades of yours are brought under my notice, you will leave my house at once, never to re-enter it."

"What I say I mean; I never indulge in idle threats. Unless you wish to be cut off with a shilling, and turned out into the world to shift for yourself, you will alter your present course of life, and become a respectable member of society."

This speech had an effect even upon Dick's

mercurial nature. He was fond of his uncle too, apart from the wealth the old man possessed, and he had no wish to raise a lasting barrier between them.

"I must try to pull up," he said to himself, on his way to the detested office. "It's too bad to worry and vex the governor beyond a certain point, and I can see that he means mischief this time if I get into any more scrapes. For Kitty's sake, I ought to do my best to keep in favour with him, apart from other motives. Good-bye Kitty! Our engagement would put the crowning touch to all my offences if Uncle John only knew of it."

Once at the office Dick worked like a slave, so on his own term till four o'clock; when with the relieved air of one who had done ample penance for past shortcomings, he hailed a passing hansom, and was driven rapidly away in the direction of Grosvenor-square.

"Adelaide will give me some tea after my labour," he thought idly; and the house in Grosvenor-square is far more cheerful than our own palatial residence, which always reminds me of a family vault on a large scale. How Walter and Uncle John contrive to pass so much of their time in it I can't imagine."

The pretty drawing-room into which he was presently ushered contained two occupants—Adelaide Vernon, Walter Hamilton's niece; and the elderly lady, a bishop's widow, with whom she resided.

Miss Vernon, a tall handsome girl, with an olive complexion, large deep-set eyes, and coils of raven-black hair, fastened by a silver dagger, gave Dick a cordial greeting. There was a certain languid, high-bred grace about all her movements that rendered them subtly fascinating. Only the few people who knew her will, however, detect her utter want of consideration for the feelings or the well-being of others, while the refined insolence of look and tone that she frequently assumed went far towards proving that high-breeding and good-breeding are not always one and the same.

Walter Hamilton had met her in society previous to the death of her mother, Lady Vernon. Secretly ambitious to marry, someone higher in rank than himself, he had wooed the stately beautiful girl, and she, in return, had willingly accepted his offer of marriage. If Walter required birth and high-breeding in a wife, Miss Vernon, whose income was a very small one, ardently longed for a rich husband! Their engagement met with old John Hamilton's cordial approval, and they were to be married as soon as the term of mourning for Adelaide's mother should have expired. In the meantime she had taken up her abode with Mrs. Thorold, the bishop's widow stepsister, and Dick, glad to escape from the dreariness of the Hamilton ménage, was a frequent visitor.

"Well, bad boy!" she exclaimed playfully, as Dick seated himself beside her, after paying due respect to Mrs. Thorold, "so you are in disgrace again. People who go home at one o'clock in the morning, should be careful not to drop boots on the landing."

"Walter has been here already, telling tales," said Dick, placitively. "Now I call that horribly mean of him. I hope you defended me in my absence."

"The most eloquent pleader could hardly 'whitewash' such an old offender," was the laughing reply. Adelaide Vernon was not at all sure that she did not like Dick—handsome, debonnaire Dick—a great deal better than his staid elder brother. But then Dick was a rolling stone, who would never gather any moss; and, though his erratic goings on amused and interested her, she remained firm in her allegiance to Walter, who bade fair to become a millionaire after his uncle's death. Sally Brass liked poor Dick Swiveller, much after the same fashion.

"I'd only been spending the evening with some harriers of my acquaintance," he explained. "We went to the Criterion first, and then we adjourned to their chambers for a little supper."

"I expect the supper consisted chiefly of

wine and cigars," said Adelaide. A lady visitor was absorbing Mrs. Thorold's attention, and prevented her from being scandalised by the young man's frank revelations.

"Not altogether," continued Dick; "there were both solids and liquids on the table. It was a very cosy little affair, but I had to pay dearly for it this morning. Uncle John informed me, at the close of a long lecture, that any more freaks of mine, coming under the notice of his respectable eyes, will result in his giving me the sack at once. However, I am to decide upon some profession within the next three months."

"If he does anything sufficiently bad to make Mr. Hamilton disinherit him, Walter will be the sole heir," was the thought that dashed through Adelaide Vernon's mind. Here was a cold and calculating nature.

"What profession have you fixed upon?" she said aloud.

"I haven't fixed upon any," replied Dick, airily; tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor, I care about as much for one as the other. If I have any preference it is for the travelling tinker's life, since it combines ease and varied experience without entailing much responsibility."

"Unless you ruin somebody's kettle in trying to mend it," said Adelaide. She liked to jest with Dick, but she never gave him any earnest womanly advice, or made any effort to check him in his wild career.

Dick drank his tea, and ate his slice of pound cake. Then—feeling ashamed to stay any longer—he took leave of Adelaide Vernon and Mrs. Thorold, and went straight to the club.

He dined there after a modest fashion, looked in at the theatre for an hour later on, and amazed the entire household by reaching home just as the clocks were striking eleven.

"If I go on improving at this rapid rate I shall reach perfection by a short cut," was his last reflection before falling asleep to dream that he had married Kitty, and that they were trudging round the country on their wedding tour in the respective capacities of a travelling tinker and a fortune-teller.

## CHAPTER II.

DICK HAMILTON fulfilled his office duties on the following day in a steady, plodding manner that caused the clerks to lay their heads together, and wonder what had come to him. He must be in disgrace with his uncle, they opined, or he would not sit there quill-driving, hour after hour, when he had never before been known to work save by fits and starts.

When the hand of the dusty-faced office clock pointed to four Dick threw down his pen with a gasp of relief, and went away, humming an air from one of Balfe's operas. He did not charter a hansom this time, but walked quickly on till he came to a post, but fairly respectable street, leading out of the Strand. His loud knock at the door of a somewhat superior-looking house was answered by a plump little woman, with whom he seemed to be very well acquainted.

After exchanging a brisk fire of nonsense with her Dick sprang lightly upstairs. The door of a room on the second floor opened quickly, as if someone had been on the lookout for him, and a small, pretty girl ran out to meet him with an exclamation of delight.

"Daddy, he's come!" she cried gleefully. "I knew he would, and he can stay till it is time for you to go to the theatre. Won't that be delightful? Tea's quite ready, Dick, and I've made such a splendid cake in honour of your arrival."

"Sure it isn't heavy?" said Dick, approvingly placing his arm round her slim waist, and kissing her fondly, as together they entered the little sitting-room, the occupant of which rose from his chair, and laid aside his pipe to welcome the visitor.

If the well-worn furniture of the room bespoke the poverty of its inmates there were many signs of good taste and skilful contrivance to be discerned in it.

Cheap engravings of world-renowned pictures



hung upon the walls; antimacassars and pretty, inexpensive costume helped to cover the faded chairs; while books and papers were scattered about in every corner. The table in the centre of the room was spread for tea, and a vase holding wild flowers stood on the breakfast cloth.

Ernest Lambert, the actor, who with his daughter, Kitty, rented the second floor apartments in question, was an elderly man with grey hair, and a pensive kindly face, that showed trouble alike had helped to furrow. He had never made much headway in his profession; for, although he did not lack his artistic talent, he had none of the push and the self-confidence that help to attract notice, and obtain success for their owners.

His few, sensitive nature had been against him in some respects; and now, in the decline of life, he was glad to take any minor part offered to him by a manager, in return for a very modest salary.

Kitty Lambert, the actor's only child, was a girl of seventeen. She had a small, well-developed figure, and brown hair that clustered round her head in short wavy curls, making her look not unlike a pretty boy. Her great dimpled blue eyes, flashing gleams of defiance or mischief at will, were shaded by long curling lashes, and her somewhat large, but firm and dimpled mouth displayed the pearly teeth within.

Kitty was not an actress. It had been her father's wish that she should not follow his profession, and she had reluctantly renounced her dream of one day becoming a "star" at his request.

She looked after the home, and, having a penchant for scribbling, she filled up her spare time by writing stories and bright little articles that frequently found acceptance; the money she received for her work helping to swell the Lambert's scanty income.

A quick-tempered, warm-hearted, lovable girl, inclined to be thoughtless and wilful; Kitty dominated over those she cared most for like some little empress.

Dick Hamilton had fallen in love with her on the occasion of their first meeting, when he had assisted her over a dangerous crossing. After that he had contrived to waylay her from time to time, always treating her with the most obsequious respect, until Kitty, who was cautious personified, made the affair known to her father.

It took Dick some time to convince this old actor that his intentions towards Kitty were really honourable and above suspicion; but when he had once succeeded in doing so, Ernest Lambert placed no hindrance in the way of the engagement for which the young man pleaded.

He could not find it in his heart to thwart Kitty, or to take the sunshine from her life by depriving her of her lover. If it annoyed him to know their engagement must, for the present, remain a secret.

Dick had explained to him the necessity for caution and prudence, if his prejudiced relatives were not to be offended beyond all hope of forgiveness. But, although the actor had consented to the engagement, a secret marriage was one of the things he steadily refused to permit.

"Did you have a pleasant day in the country yesterday?" inquired Dick, as they took their places at the tea-table after the old-fashioned way. "I thought about you both while I was strolling away in the office, and didn't I wish that I had been able to go with you?"

"Poor fellow!" said Kitty, in a sympathetic tone. "I think your people treat you very badly, Dick. Yes, we had a lovely time, didn't we, daddy? It was so nice to see the fresh green fields, and to pick one's own flowers, instead of buying them done up in tight half-faded bunches. When I am in the country I don't wonder why the poets have so much to say about spring delights."

"Yes, lamb outlets, green peas, early cucumbers, and that sort of thing," remarked Dick, with a mischievous gleam in his grey

eyes. "They all come together at this time of year, and they are delightful, especially the outlets."

Kitty darted a glance of withering scorn at her mother-of-fact lover.

"The poets were not gourmands," she said, severely, "and you know very well that I was not alluding to such things, Dick. You don't deserve to hear our good news after such a speech, and yet I must tell you, because I can't keep it to myself any longer. Father has got an engagement at the Adelphi, a better one than he has had before for a long while."

"I am very glad to hear it," said Dick, heartily. "You must allow me to congratulate you, sir, upon this piece of good fortune. I'm sure that you really deserve it."

"Well, I don't know about that," replied the actor, with a smile; "but I'm glad to get it, nevertheless, and, since the character is one that I feel at home in, the task of impersonating it will be really a pleasure."

Kitty's father accepted his lowly lot with so much contentment—he was so patient under disappointment, so grateful for any small success that fell to his share—that Dick Hamilton sometimes regarded him with a feeling of respectful awe. Such men when they die leave the world all the richer and the better for their having once lived in it.

"I wonder which rôle would suit me best if I were to take to the stage," Dick remarked presently. "Kitty, child, can you help me to a profession? I've only three months allowed me in which to make up my mind."

And then he acquainted his listeners with the incident of the snapper party, and the "wiggling" from his uncle that had followed it. Kitty's pretty face wore rather a grave look at the conclusion, and she did not offer any suggestions.

"Your uncle is quite right in wishing you to make the best use of your time, Mr. Hamilton," said the actor quietly. "The years that come between twenty and thirty, in my opinion, form the best part of a man's life. They are full of fresh, vigorous strength, and if we waste them we cannot retrieve the lost opportunities later on."

"And time is money," put in Kitty, sentimentally.

"I wish my tailor would only think so," responded Dick, cheerfully. "I'd get him to take some of my idle hours then in payment of the bill he is always warring me about. Seriously, though, I am going to please everybody by turning over a new leaf, and looking after my own interests. Now, about the profession. What do you say to the army, Kitty?"

"I think you would look very nice in uniform," said Kitty, musingly. "Oh, how I should like to see you in the Guards! But there is the examination, Dick; that has to come first, you know."

"I should squeeze through somehow, with the help of a first-rate coach," was the confident reply; "and, once in the service, Uncle John would look upon me as a made man. Walter would be nowhere when Major-General Hamilton appeared upon the scene."

"He's a general already, Kitty," said the actor quaintly, as he rose and put on his coat. "Promotion must be very rapid in the army. Good night, child. Now, Mr. Hamilton, are you ready?"

"Coming, sir," cried Dick, who had lingered behind to bestow a parting kiss upon Kitty, who clung to his arm and whispered softly:

"Try to keep right, dear, for my sake, and don't do anything more to vex your uncle."

"You may trust me; I really am going to reform this time, little woman," was the earnest reply; and then, having watched her lover and her father go down the street together, Kitty got out her desk, and wrote industriously for the next two hours at a lover's story; her own unfinished love-story running through her mind like an undercurrent all the while.

Parting from the actor at the corner of the street, Dick went home, little dreaming of the reception in store for him there.

He was quite sincere in his resolve to turn over a new leaf, but, sometimes, when wild oats have been sown with a liberal hand the harvest springs up unexpectedly, just as we are trying to make some better use of the ground, and such proved to be the case looking with Dick Hamilton.

Six months before he had been persuaded into buying a horse which the dealer assured him was well worth the large sum demanded for it. Dick, who prided himself on his knowledge of horses, of which he really knew very little, flew into a passion on discovering the shabby bay mare to be faulty from shoulder to fetlock. The horse-dealer had refused to acknowledge the fault, or to take anything off the original price, and Dick, in consequence, had declined payment. That very afternoon, directly Dick had left his uncle's office, the man put in an appearance there while under the influence of drink, and demanded to see the principal.

While waiting to be admitted to the inner sanctum where the head of the firm received visitors, he aired his grievance to the clerks in no measured language. Old John Hamilton, stung to the quick by this humiliation and annoyance of Dick's causing, paid the horse-dealer exactly what he asked, without making any protest, and got rid of him as quickly as possible. But his hand trembled as he signed the cheque, for he had never been known to break his word, and, in accordance with what he had said only yesterday, Dick must now be sent adrift.

Both John Hamilton and his nephew Walter, who, to do him justice, was very sorry for what had occurred, were in the dining-room when Dick got home, awaiting his arrival. Walter had tried to put in a plea for his brother, but the old merchant had silenced him peremptorily, and he knew that from will was not lightly to be tampered with.

"What is the matter?" inquired Dick, glancing from one troubled face to the other, in all amazement.

"Not much, as considered from your point of view," replied his uncle, sarcastically, "since you are in the habit of taking everything lightly. That is your receipted bill, Richard. It is the last that I shall ever have the pleasure of handing to you. You remember what I told you would happen if any more debts of your contracting were brought under my notice? The caution was given only yesterday, and to-day another debt has been flung in my face in the most shameless manner. I have paid it, and now you will oblige me by leaving my house, as soon as you have packed up your personal belongings, and never dare to re-enter it while I live."

Dick glanced at the paper just handed to him by his uncle, and his face grew deathly pale as he realised the serious nature of the situation.

"Allow me to remind you, sir," he said quietly, "that the debt in question was contracted previous to the warning I received from you yesterday. It was not a fair debt either, since the horse turned out to be a swindled screw, and it was my intention to contest the dealer's claim."

"It matters not when it was contracted," retorted the old man fiercely. "My words to you were to the effect that you should leave my house a disinherited man if any other debts came to my knowledge, irrespective of time or date. Perhaps your horse-dealing friends will help you to earn a living now that you are thrown upon your own resources. I have done my utmost for you, I have given you a splendid education. I would have helped you to a profession, and wall you have rewarded me. And I throw the money that I have spent upon you out into the street; it could hardly have brought me less pleasure or profit."

A nervous contraction passed over Dick's fair, handsome face as these bitter words fell upon his ear, and his grey eyes wore a troubled expression. He was too proud to plead for the forgiveness that he knew would not be granted

to him, but conscience forced him to recognise the truth contained in his uncle's statement, and he felt reluctant to leave the man who had been to him a second father under such painful auspices.

"Won't you shake hands with me before I go, uncle John?" he said, rather wistfully. "I know that I have made you a very poor return for all your kindness, and yet, believe me, I am not altogether ungrateful for it, or for what you would have done for me had I behaved differently. I shall never trouble you again, since you have thought proper to disown me, but don't let us part ill friends."

"Go at once; Ferguson will help you with your packing," replied John Hamilton, ignoring Dick's outstretched hand, and turning away from him as he spoke. "I have but one nephew now, and I shall never acknowledge any other. I regard you in the light of a bad, a very bad, investment. As to your gratitude I can hardly be expected to believe in that, since it has never taken a practical form, and the sooner you are out of my house the better I shall like it."

Without another word Dick turned to depart, and his brother went out after him.

When the door had closed behind them John Hamilton flung himself into a chair and hid his worn face in his hands. He had adhered firmly to his Spartan principles; he had given way to no fond, sentimental weakness, and yet the scapegrace he had just sent adrift was still a thousand times dearer to him than the good dutiful nephew who had never given him an hour's uneasiness. It ought not to be so, he told himself angrily, but he could not root out his love for Dick, although it seemed like an injustice directed against Walter.

Dick bundled his belongings together in less than an hour, and took his departure from the home of his youth and early manhood, refusing to accept a cheque that Walter wished to press upon him.

Consternation and woe reigned supreme throughout the household when once it became generally known that he was "going for good."

Dick had kept them up late and sent them on errands at all hours of the day, and yet the servants one and all liked him. He bade them good-bye in his old, bright, airy manner, and confided his bulldog, Jack, to the safe keeping of the footman. But they could see that he was sorely distressed, and they pitied him as much as they secretly blamed their master for sending him away.

"Shure, an' he was the best-hearted bhoey in the world," sobbed Molly, the housemaid, while she buried her face in one of Dick's discarded coats, redolent of cigar-smoke and the latest fashionable perfume. "I'll keep the ould coat to remind me of him, that I will. But it's the masher who ought to be well ashamed of himself for sending his own nephew away widout a penny by reason of his being a little wild. That's a quare way to go to work to make a better man of him, I'm thinking."

John Hamilton had an interview with his lawyer on the following day, and made an important alteration in his will. Perhaps that scene with his nephew and the subsequent suffering it entailed upon him helped to sap the old man's remaining strength. He was taken suddenly ill about a week after Dick's departure, and he died before a doctor could be summoned. To the last his thoughts were centred upon the scapegrace.

"I won't break my word, Walter," he said feebly to the nephew who was supporting his head. "I won't leave your brother so much as a penny, but when I am gone, promise me that you will help him instead. Don't let him come to want, and tell him that before I died I freely forgave him all his wild, wrong-headed actions in the past. Promise me that you will help poor Dick liberally; you will be too rich to miss a few thousands, Walter."

Walter gave the required promise, and then, with Dick's name still upon his lips, old John Hamilton passed quietly away to join the great majority.

### CHAPTER III.

THE tidings of his uncle's sudden death caused Dick to experience a great deal of sorrow and remorse—feelings that, in his case, were in no wise connected with filthy lucre.

That angry parting, when he had last seen the old man alive, preyed upon his mind, and troubled him beyond measure. It was some consolation to learn from Walter that he had been forgiven at the final moment, but he made no reply when his brother alluded to the dead man's wish that his disinherited nephew should be provided for by the one to whom he had left the bulk of his enormous fortune.

It was not pleasant for Dick to know that he was dependent upon his brother for the mere necessities of life, apart from its luxuries; the idea of being a pensioner upon another person's bounty must always carry some disagreeable associations with it. To be an independent legatee is far more agreeable.

"I shall attend the funeral," he said, moodily, "but I shall not be present when the will is read. Uncle John has left me out in the cold, and I won't sit there to be branded as a black sheep by all the well-to-do Pharisees who are sure to muster strong upon such an occasion. Jack Idle will keep in the background, while William Goodchild goes to the front to receive the reward of merit."

"I thought it was Francis," rejoined Walter, with a smile.

"Jack or Francis, it's all the same," was the reply. "He never did any good for himself, and so there's a strong family likeness between us."

Walter Hamilton experienced a strange, pleasant sense of power and authority as the contents of his late uncle's will were gradually unfolded for the benefit of a great many attentive listeners. Did ever anyone have a more attentive audience than a lawyer engaged in reading a will to a number of interested persons?

John Hamilton had provided for all his old servants, besides leaving large sums of money to various charitable institutions. The whole of his colossal business, however, was left without any reservation to his "good and dutiful nephew," Walter Hamilton. Dick's name was not even mentioned; he had been cut off without so much as the proverbial shilling.

Those present regarded the young man upon whom so much wealth and responsibility had suddenly devolved with respectful wonder and quiet envy, but one and all felt sorry for poor Dick.

It annoyed Walter, even in the first flush of his new prosperity, to perceive the sympathy lavished upon the absent and disinherited scapegrace. Relatives, friends, clerks alike shared in the feeling of commiseration, and as for the old housekeeper, to whom the dead man had given an annuity of sixty pounds, the ungrateful old creature sat down and wept, because "Poor dear Master Dick hadn't got so much as the money to buy a mourning ring with."

"It was my uncle's wish that I should make some provision for my brother," Walter explained, in his usual terse, concise manner. "It is hardly necessary for me to add that it is my intention to fulfil that wish at the earliest opportunity. But for some irregularity of conduct, into which I need not enter at the present moment, Richard would not have been disinherited, and I do not consider that our deceased uncle was guilty of any harshness or want of forbearance towards his younger nephew."

There was nothing more to be said either for or against the will. People cannot afford to quarrel with Dives when there is no personal motive in question, and Walter Hamilton entered upon the possession of his new property amid general congratulations.

He was really anxious to do something for Dick without loss of time, and a liberal offer was shaping itself out in his mind when an incident came under his notice that tended to

dispel all the practical interest he was about to evince in his brother's welfare.

Walking down the Strand one day he caught sight of Dick on ahead, accompanied by a young girl. The two were evidently on familiar terms with each other, and Dick was talking earnestly to his pretty, well-dressed companion. Presently they went into a shop to make some trifling purchase. When they came out again Dick was carrying the girl's basket, and, after another glance at the tempting shop-windows, they turned down a side street and vanished from sight.

"I wonder what fresh trouble that wretched boy is brewing for himself now," thought Walter, angrily. "I gave him credit for having kept clear of love affairs thus far. The girl is pretty and ladylike, but she may have designs upon Dick, while her antecedents may be the reverse of desirable. I must ascertain who and what she is before I offer him any help."

When business hours were over Walter Hamilton went to the hotel at which Dick was staying, and found that young gentleman in the act of enjoying a cigar and a split soda, while he perused the pages of the *St. James's Gazette*.

"Dick, I saw you in the Strand this morning with a young woman," he began, after a few preliminary remarks. "I hope that you are not drifting into any foolish entanglement. It is much easier to get into such things than to get out of them again, you know."

Dick's fair face flushed hotly.

"You're worse than a private detective," he retorted. "I don't interfere with your love affairs, and you have no right to pry into mine. Do you want the love-making, as well as the money, to be all on your side, you dog-in-the-manger?"

"I want to feel sure that you are not doing anything calculated to disgrace the family," was the quiet reply. "To love-making, carried out in a proper manner, between suitable persons, I have not the least objection, as you are aware; but your behaviour, Dick, has been so erratic, not to say unsatisfactory, that I could hardly help feeling suspicious when I saw you with a female companion. If there is nothing wrong in question, why should you wish to keep your acquaintance with her a secret from me?"

"Right or wrong, I am not bound to tell you everything," said Dick, rather sullenly.

"If you refuse to tell me, I shall wash my hands of you altogether," Walter answered, sternly. "I always thought you weak, Dick, but I did not give you credit for being wicked. That girl—"

"Is a good, honest, well-bred girl, fit to be placed on a level with Adelaide Vernon," cried the other. "If you venture to say one word against her we shall quarrel, Walter. I may as well tell you now as later on, although I had wished to keep my secret a little longer, from motives of policy; we are engaged to be married, and she is my fiancée."

"Indeed!" remarked Walter Hamilton, with a curious contraction of his thin, flexible lips. "May I inquire what position in life your fiancée occupies, and what family connections your marriage will entail upon you?"

"Her father is an actor, and Kitty looks after the house, and writes for some of the magazines," explained Dick, conscious that the Lamberts would not find favour in his brother's sight, owing to their want of social status. "They are very nice people, Walter; immensely superior to the position they occupy. When you know them you will acknowledge as much, and Kitty will make me an excellent little wife. When once we are married I mean to settle down into a sober, hard-working fellow, so the ceremony cannot take place too soon."

"Will you meet me at Mr. Pierrepont's office to-morrow morning at ten o'clock?" Walter inquired, suavely, quite ignoring the fact of his brother's engagement. "I want to do what I can for you in accordance with Uncle John's wish, and, unless you choose to stand in your own light, Dick, I dare say we



shall be able to arrive at an amicable conclusion."

"All right, I'll be there," responded Dick, vexed to think Walter attached so little importance to his engagement that he had not even made a comment upon it. Walter went away soon after the interview had been arranged between them, and each experienced a feeling of relief on being rid of the other; brotherly love between the two men was certainly at a discount.

Far from being indifferent to Dick's engagement, however, Walter Hamilton was profoundly annoyed by it, and he wanted time to devise some plan for bringing it to an end.

About to raise the tone of the family himself by marrying one of the aristocracy, it exasperated him beyond measure to reflect that Dick was doing his best to degrade it, by promising to wed the daughter of a poor actor. What would Adelaide Vernon say should the disgraceful news ever reach her ears?

Not that the Hamiltons had much to boast of in the matter of family. They had always been solid, well-to-do, middle-class people, who, with some few exceptions, had made their money in trade. Nevertheless, they were all great sticklers for caste, and they had a certain position to maintain in society. Dick's contemplated *mésalliance* was therefore calculated to fill his brother's soul with indignation and disgust.

"What help I offer him must be purely conditional," Walter Hamilton reflected, when dining by himself in solitary state that night. "Even Uncle John would not wish me to encourage Dick in making a low marriage that would very likely end in the Divorce Court. I fancy my offer will be large enough to tempt him, and, if so, it will not be the first time that Mammon has gained the victory over Love."

Dick contrived to be ten minutes behind time in reaching Mr. Pierrepont's office on the following morning, just to maintain an attitude of independence. Walter made no comment upon his want of punctuality, though; and Mr. Pierrepont, the family lawyer, after a brief salutation, sat back in his leather chair, and waited for proceedings to commence between his clients.

"Mr. Pierrepont and I have been talking the matter over, Dick," said his brother; "and he considers that the offer I am about to make you is a fair and a reasonable one, so far as the pecuniary aspect of it is concerned. With the rest he has nothing whatever to do. Since Uncle John made no provision for you in his will, I am prepared to offer you a sum amounting to twenty thousand pounds, or a share in the business representing the same value. Your disinclination for business has induced me to give you this alternative. If you prefer to receive the money it shall be placed to your account at once, but, in either case, my offer is accompanied by a condition."

"Ah, there is always a 'but' in the background," remarked Dick, sarcastically. "What does your condition consist of? It must be a very big pill, indeed, if so much gold cannot induce me to swallow it."

"Before receiving the sum mentioned you must give me your word of honour that you will abandon all thoughts of the unsuitable marriage with the daughter of an actor that you contemplate making," continued the other, rather nervously. Dick's temper was apt at times to flame out so quickly. "If you persist in taking such a false step I shall give you no assistance whatever. Be reasonable for once, Dick, and don't ruin your life at the turning-point by a wrong decision. Fortune and prosperity await you on the one hand, poverty and an endless succession of squalid ills and vain regrets—the fruits of an unequal match—are ranged upon the other. What is a pretty face in comparison with wealth and a successful career?"

"Or a girl's broken heart, when a man's selfish pride is in question?" said Dick, with a bitter laugh. "The figures certainly had an imposing sound, but you knew when you named

them that your offer was a safe one, that I should reject it without a moment's hesitation. You are a capital man of business, Walter."

"I made the offer in all sincerity," rejoined his brother; "and I thought you would have just sense enough to accept it. As for the girl herself, people belonging to that class usually regard pecuniary compensation as a fair equivalent for any sentimental grievance."

"Of course all the fine feeling is monopolized by those belonging to the upper classes," observed Dick. "They run away with their grooms, and they write scandalous paragraphs about their own relatives for the society journals in return for money; but still, the fine feeling is theirs all the same. Being only a commoner, I claim the right to act in a different manner. If I wished to break faith with my fiancée I should do so right out, and not insult her by offering her a cheque instead of marriage. I love her far too well to do anything of the kind; but, had I ceased to care for her, were she old and ugly, instead of young and pretty, having once promised to make her my wife, not all the wealth stored up in your warehouses would tempt me to break my promise."

"You deliberately refuse to accept my offer, then?" said Walter, calmly. "Well, if you prefer romance to common-sense there is no help for it."

"Your own sense of honour should surely tell you that there is no other course open to me," rejoined Dick, who was fast losing his temper. "Had you really wished to benefit me, you would not have burdened your offer of help with such a condition."

"I cannot strain my sense of honour to meet the requirements of the case in point," was the unflinching reply. "I will do nothing to help on a marriage that I disapprove of so strongly. Legally, I am not bound to give you a farthing, and since you refuse to fall in with my wishes, the moral claim you have upon me is considerably weakened. I cannot waste any more time in trying to change your decision; I must be going."

"You may go to Jericho if you like, without taking a return ticket," said Dick, angrily.

"Oh, come, come, this is a very bad termination to what should have been a satisfactory interview," interposed the lawyer, in a tone of remonstrance. "Sit down again gentlemen, and let us see if we cannot effect a compromise."

"I won't hear of such a thing!" thundered Dick.

"Neither will I," said Walter. "You may look upon my offer as still open to you, Dick, if you care to reconsider your decision. Otherwise I shall not help you by so much as a five-pound note, while your marriage will effect a complete separation between us. I wish you both good-morning."

He went away, leaving Dick and the lawyer still facing each other in perfect silence.

Mr. Pierrepont was a little, chubby-faced, grey-haired man, not unlike an elderly cherub, rather the worse for wear; but if his expression was "childlike and bland," very little escaped the notice of his keen, twinkling, dark eyes.

"You've made a nice bonfire of your prospects in life, master Dick," he remarked, consolingly; "and all for the sake of a woman. Dear me, how foolish you young men are."

"Could I, as a man of honour, have acted otherwise?" inquired Dick. "Mind, I am not going to pay you six-and-eightpence for the answer."

"Well, speaking as a private individual, I cannot blame you, although, from a professional point of view, your conduct is much to be deplored. I formed my estimate of your character some time ago, and I must say that I should have been disappointed in you had you accepted your brother's prudent, but somewhat unfeeling, terms. I wish, for your own sake, that you had not become acquainted with this—young person. Since you have promised to marry her, though, you could hardly refuse to do so, without being guilty of a mean and dishonourable action. What are you going to

do now that you have fallen out with your brother?"

"I hardly know," said Dick, thoughtfully. "I must get employment of some kind as soon as possible. A profession is as much out of my reach now as the moon."

"You know something of office work," continued the lawyer; "and I happen to be in want of another clerk. I can offer you a desk in my office, and a salary of a hundred and fifty to start with. That would keep your head above water till something better turned up for you, if you chose to accept it."

"I shall be only too glad to accept it," said Dick, gratefully. "At the end of a week I shall be ready to commence my new duties."

"And what do you want that week for?" inquired Mr. Pierrepont.

"I am going to get married," was the brief reply.

"Ah, well, a wilful man must have his way," said the man of law, with a shrug. "I shall not allow you any special privileges, remember, and you will be placed on the same footing with the other clerks. Above all, you must learn to be punctual."

Dick expressed his willingness to submit to Mr. Pierrepont's rules, and then the employer and the employed parted for the time being. With the excitement of the interview still strong upon him Dick hurried away in the direction of the Lamberts' lodging.

"Well, Dick, are you a rich man?" said Kitty, as he entered the little sitting-room with a cloud on his usually bright, careless face.

"No, Kitty," he replied; "but I am a free one, and that is better still. We can get married to-morrow without asking anyone's pleasure, and I can work for you and myself with a feeling of proud independence."

"You have quarrelled with your brother," said the actor, quietly.

"Oh, Dick, dear, what made you do it!" cried Kitty. "Was it our engagement that displeased him?"

"Never mind," rejoined her lover. "You are worth more to me than all the gold in the world, Kitty. I've got a situation, think of that, and I'm going to begin work next week. Why, you dear little goose, there's nothing to cry about."

"I don't know whether I'm most glad or sorry to think how much I have cost you," sobbed Kitty.

"But he will not be permitted to lose by it in the end," said her father, warmly. Mr. Hamilton, I can never thank you enough for remaining constant to my child under such trying circumstances. If—"

"Not another word," interposed Dick, as he threw his arm round the girl's slender waist. "Kitty, stop crying at once, and Lambert, give me your hand; you, at least, are not ashamed to own me, and, for the future, we're bound to sink or swim together."

(To be concluded in our next.)

THE HOTTEST SPOT ON EARTH.—One of the hottest regions of the earth is along the Persian Gulf, where little or no rain falls. At Bahrain the arid shore has no fresh water, yet a comparatively numerous population contrives to live there, thanks to the copious springs which burst forth from the bottom of the sea. The fresh water is got by diving. The diver, sitting in his boat, winds a great goat's skin bag around his left arm, the hand grasping its mouth; then he takes in his hand a heavy stone, to which is attached a strong line, and thus equipped he plunges in and quickly reaches the bottom. Instantly opening the bag over the strong jet of fresh water, he springs up the ascending current, at the same time closing the bag, and is helped on board. The stone is then hauled up, and the diver, after taking breath, plunges in again. The source of these copious submarine springs is thought to be in the green hills of Osman, some 500 or 600 miles distant.

## THE FAIR ELAINE.

## CHAPTER XIV.

"IT SEEMS INCREDIBLE."

Born Arley and Miss McAllister regarded the retreating girl with amazement so profound that, for the moment, they were rendered speechless.

Could it be possible that the girl had only come to them, as she said, to establish her identity, and was now willing to return to the toil and obscurity of the life which she had been leading? Had she no thoughts of her rights of heritage? of the position she might occupy as the granddaughter of Dr. McAllister, and the heiress to his property?

"Stop!" Arley cried, as soon as she could collect her scattered wits, and just as the young girl was going to pass out of the room.

Ina turned, with a half-frightened look, at the authoritative command.

"Where are you going?" Arley asked.

"Back to Mrs. Alden. They have been very kind to me, and I have been happier with them than I ever was in my life before; and they will be glad to keep me with them as long as I like to stay," Ina answered.

"But—but—it seems incredible! Was your only object in coming here just to establish your identity? Had you nothing else in view?" And Arley studied the fair face earnestly, as one put these questions.

"No, that was all; I could not rest until I was satisfied as to who I was. I wanted to be sure that there had been an Evelyn Wentworth—to hear her friends acknowledge her and confess that I must be her child. At first," she continued, her sweet lips trembling, "or until I saw Mr. Holley, I had a faint hope that one or both of my parents might be living and would gladly claim their long-lost child. Oh! how happy I should have been to have found them, and to have been sheltered by their care and love, but since that cannot be I am content with the knowledge that I have gained from you to-day. Perhaps—"

She hesitated and cast a wistful look at Miss McAllister, which touched her deeply.

"Perhaps what?" Arley questioned, still still regarding her closely.

"Perhaps," and her eyes were still fixed appealingly on the old lady's face, "you might be willing, since you believe me to be the child of your niece, that I should come to see you once in a while to learn something about my father and mother. Oh! you can never know how meagre my life has been, and how I have yearned for love like theirs," and a little sob choked her utterance.

Without giving her aunt time to reply to this appeal, Arley got up from her chair and crossed the room to where the girl stood, with her hand still resting upon the knob of the door.

She laid her two hands upon her shoulders, and looked searchingly down into her clear, earnest eyes.

"Did you not expect to come here to live? This would have been your home—all these luxuries yours, you know, if you had been brought here instead of me. Did you have no thought of the fortune which my grandfather—your grandfather, left to his grandchild? Tell me!" she added, almost fiercely, "you, who have the face, and eyes, and voice of the woman whom I have always revered as my mother; did you not come here to wrest all these things from me, together with my name and birthright?"

The gentle girl struck just a little from her questioner, with her intense gaze and tones, but she answered with exceeding sweetness, yet with a sort of impressive dignity.

"No; believe me, I did not; all that I wanted for was the right to bear my father's name—to be acknowledged as his child. I want to have nothing from you of all the comforts that you have been led to believe your own. I have made you unhappy enough by proving my claim to the name which you have

always borne, and I will not make an enemy of you. Now, I have told you why I came, let me go, and I will never annoy you again."

"But, child, I never heard of such a thing! All these things are yours—this beautiful home—alas! I believe I never realized until this moment how very beautiful and dear it is!" Arley said, in trembling tones, looking around upon all the luxuries which lay about her, "and the fortune which Dr. McAllister left—a fortune of twenty thousand pounds. Is it yours by right of heritage?"

"I know," Mr. Alden said something of this to me," Ina returned, with a troubled, uneasy glance at her companion, "but I could not think of taking them away from you, who, all your life, have regarded them as belonging to you. Dr. McAllister always looked upon you as his grandchild; you grew up under his love and care; to you, the child of his affection, he gave this lovely home and his fortune, and not to me, of whose existence he was wholly ignorant."

"But the law will give it all to you. It will decree that it all belongs to you, the real heir," Arley persisted.

"The law need have nothing to do about it," Ina answered, quickly. "And, oh! I do not wish to deprive you of one single thing. I should feel mean, degraded to take from you what has become a necessity to you from the force of habit and expectation. You have been very tenderly reared, and led to believe that all your future would be like the past, since ample provision was made for you in Dr. McAllister's will. It would be cruel for me to wrest it from you and consign you to such poverty as I have known. You could never work for your living, while I have been brought up to take care of, and depend upon myself."

"You are the strangest, most unselfish girl that I ever met in my life!" Arley exclaimed, regarding her wonderingly and with a sort of reverence; and then, actuated by an impulse which she could not resist, she bent forward and kissed the fair, upturned forehead.

Ina caught her breath quickly at the act.

"I thought you would almost hate me," she said, with a little sob; "and, oh! you never can know how I dreaded to come to you."

"Hate you! It would be impossible to hate such a sweet spirit as you have shown yourself to be," Arley answered, earnestly. But you must not be allowed to wrong yourself; right is right. You are the child of this house, I am simply a usurper—an unintentional one, 'tis true, yet a usurper none the less. Good Heavens!" she cried wildly, as if suddenly overpowered by the thought; "if you are the real Arley Wentworth, who and what am I? Where, in all this wide world, are my kindred, and how am I ever to find them?"

"But wait," she added more calmly. "I must not think of that now; justice must be done first."

She moved with a quick, firm step across the room and rang her bell again.

"Mary, send Mr. Paxton here immediately," she commanded of the girl when she came.

"Yes'm; he was inquiring about you a minute ago," she answered, gazing from one agitated face to another, and then disappearing to do her mistress's bidding.

Then, for a moment, Arley's forced composure gave way.

With a sudden rain of tears, she turned to Miss McAllister and threw herself into her arms.

"Oh, auntie, auntie!" she sobbed; can it be possible that I do not belong to you at all?—that all your care and affection for so many years have been given to an impostor?"

"Hush, hush, my darling!" the old lady said, brokenly, while she fondly smoothed the bright head upon her shoulder with her trembling hand. "Do not call yourself such hard, such unnecessary names. Whoever you may prove to be, you will still be my dear child just the same. It cannot alter the fact that I have always loved you, and shall love you just as long as I live."

"But I must give up everything to her. I must go away, and surrender all that has been so dear to me," said stricken Arley.

"You must and will, of course, do what is right," Miss McAllister returned, gravely; "but it does not follow that our affection for each other will ever be any the less. You were going away from me anyway. Your husband has claimed you; and so, perhaps, Heaven has sent me this other child so that I need not be quite so lonely in my old age without you."

"What a comforter you are, auntie, and how selfish of me not to have thought of you in this connection. She will be a comfort to you, I know," the young wife said, looking up, and trying to smile through her tears; and just then Philip Paxton entered the room.

## CHAPTER XV.

"What does this mean?" Philip asked, stopping short as he observed his wife's tear-stained face, and regarding the young stranger with questioning surprise.

"I have some strange news for you, Philip," Arley said, going to him and laying her hand upon his shoulder.

"It must be both strange and sad to make you weep like this on your wedding-day," he replied, tenderly, as he encircled her slight waist with his arm and regarded her anxiously. "What is it, dear?"

She told him in a few words as possible all the strange story, and her heart sank within her as she noted how the tender, anxious light died out of his eyes as he listened; how his face grew pale and stern, and a dogged, resolute expression settled about his lips. Instinctively she knew that he did not mean to acknowledge this stranger's claim, that he meant to contest for the name, position, and fortune which rightly belonged to her, by the ties of community.

But she omitted no point of proof. She explained everything, showing him the pretty little garments, together with the chain and ring which Miss McAllister had recognized as the very ones which she and her brother had sent to Evelyn's child in far-away India. "You see, Philip," she said, sadly, in conclusion; "that you have not married Arley Wentworth after all, but some poor, nameless wail, who was cast up by the sea, and brought here by mistake, to occupy the position and appropriate all the love and care which belonged to another. All my life I have been usurping this poor girl's place and privileges, while she has endured only hardships and poverty."

Had Philip Paxton been a man, loyal and true, he would at once have taken his wife in his arms, and told her that though he might not have married the "real Arley Wentworth," yet having won the woman whom alone he loved, he would be content, and the stranger might have all else, and welcome.

But he appeared to pay no heed to the appeal contained in her words.

He turned almost fiercely upon Ina, and said, with scornfully curling lips, and in tones that were cold and stern:

"Surely you can expect no one to believe a trumped-up story like this—a mere fabrication, cunningly woven. I am bound to confess—which will not bear investigation, and must—let me assure you—fall of its own weight."

"But, Philip," Arley interposed, and shrinking to hear him speak so severely; "here are the very clothes that she wore when she was found, and this little chain and ring, which Aunt Angeline recognized at once."

"Yes," said Miss McAllister; "I bought that ring and had it marked, and I must confess I was a trifle hurt when Arley was brought to us and it was put upon her hand, while she wore, instead, a fine and costly emerald. It was, of course, a more expensive ornament, but whoever presented it could not have done so with more love than I experienced when sent my simple offering to Evelyn's child, tried to think, however, that her finger might



have outgrown my ring; but I see now that I was wrong, and its absence is fully explained."

Philip scowled at the inoffensive little trinkets and the garments, which, his wife and Miss McAllister asserted, proved so much.

"They prove nothing," he insisted; "they may have been washed ashore after the wreck, and picked up by some fisherman, who now sends his child forth with this story in order to secure your fortune and position."

"But she was dressed in these things when she was found," persisted Arley, while she flashed a deep crimson at his rude implication of falsehood and intrigue on the part of the stranger.

"How do you know that?" he demanded; "you have nothing but her word to prove it; it does not follow that it was really the fact, simply because she says so. Then, just think, Arley, it is not at all likely that a sailor, who had been on the same vessel with you when he came from India, could have mistaken you for some other child; if he had not known who you were, he would never have sent you to Dr. McAllister."

"I think the sailor might very easily have mistaken me in all the confusion and terror of that wreck, particularly if, as it now seems, there was another child about my own age on the same vessel," Arley replied, gravely.

"Nonsense; it is all mere fiction—a plot to secure your money," he retorted, irritably.

Isa, who had not yet spoken since his entrance, now advanced and stood before him. Her eyes glowed and her cheeks burned hotly at his words, while her graceful form was drawn proudly erect.

"I beg pardon," she said, with something of hauteur; "but the gentleman is mistaken; I have spoken only truth—everything is exactly as I have stated."

"But, my dear young lady, that is merely an assertion, without anything to corroborate it, and you would find it very difficult to prove it before a jury," Philip said, more politely than he had yet spoken, for her manner impressed him in spite of his scepticism.

"I shall never try to prove it before a jury," she returned, with dignity. "I am satisfied in my own mind that I am the child of Captain and Mrs. Wentworth, and that is sufficient."

"Then you do not intend to take any legal steps to secure your so-called rights?" Philip said, eagerly.

"No, sir," she returned, but there was a little quiver of scorn in her voice which nettled him, and made him wonder, as Arley had done, how it was possible for any one brought up as she had been to acquire so much refinement and self-possession; "no, sir; as I have already told Mrs. Paxton, I came here with no intention of depriving her of anything; I simply wish to assume my own name, and since she has to-day taken yours, that cannot possibly harm her in any way."

He looked intensely relieved at this assurance, and remarked to his wife:

"Then you are all right, Arley, there will be no trouble."

"I do not understand you," she returned, with a troubled look.

"Why, if she takes no legal steps against you, you can still retain your fortune, and it would be a great pity, after having been led to expect it all your life, for you to be deprived of it in this way."

She turned upon him with blazing eyes.

"Philip!" she cried, in indignant astonishment.

"Well?"

"I did not expect anything like this from you," she said. "Would it be just—would it be honorable to keep it?"

"Why not? Dr. McAllister left you twenty thousand pounds, and of course he expected that you would keep it, and use it for your own benefit."

"He lets it to 'Arley Wentworth, his beloved grandchild,' 'I am not 'Arley Wentworth; I am not his 'grandchild,' as has been proved to my satisfaction to-day, and therefore I have no right to a single pound of his money. Just

think," she went on, excitedly; "of all that I have spent since I came into possession of this wealth. I have appropriated all the income year after year, spending it for my own selfish gratification, while she," with a swift motion of her hand towards Isa; "the real Arley, and rightful heir, has been in poverty and want! Think of all that I have flattered away upon this wedding finery to make myself attractive in your eyes! I feel condemned, guilty, like a thief! Look at her there in her cheap, simple garments, and then at me in my rich travelling attire, while all my life I have been sheltered by the tender care and love which should have been hers. It makes me almost hate myself to think that I have deprived her of all this, and yet I would not, wilfully, have wronged her of a single shilling had I known of this before. No, Philip, if you would retain my respect, you must not so much as suggest to me that I keep this fortune; she must have it all, to the last farthing," she concluded, with a positiveness which left him in no doubts as to her purpose.

He frowned darkly, and muttered something under his breath.

"What did you say?" she asked, while she searched his face anxiously.

"Nothing—never mind now," he said, hastily, then added, more calmly: "You are too impulsive, Arley, it is not right that you should impoverish yourself so recklessly. If you are convinced I am not, and I, with my better judgment regarding worldly affairs, am not going to allow you to do yourself this wrong—at least without incontestable proof that this young woman is what she claimed to be. But," looking at his watch, somewhat nervously; "it is almost time for us to leave, and our friends below will wonder what is detaining you so long. I presume you can be excused," he added, sarcastically, and flashing a look at the stranger; "and this matter can be looked into further upon our return."

But Arley sank down upon a chair and covered her face with her hands.

"Oh, I cannot meet any one now," she said, in a voice of distress. "I cannot go away, Philip, until this matter is settled. Go down and tell our friends that I am ill—for indeed, I feel wretchedly—tell them that our journey must be postponed for to-day, and ask them to excuse me."

"Nonsense, Arley; this will never do at all," Philip returned, impatiently; "you must come; our tickets are purchased and everything arranged for the trip."

But she shook her head resolutely and repeated:

"I cannot go until this question is proved and settled."

"It will never be proved," he cried, hotly; "for there is no truth in this story; we have not the slightest real proof that this girl is what she claims."

Miss McAllister had listened to him throughout with a grave face; now she approached him, and said:

"Wait, Mr. Paxton, for a few moments, I want to go downstairs, and perhaps I can help you a little about this matter when I return."

"Very well," he answered, gloomily, and walking to a window looked moodily out upon the street, while she quickly left the room.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE PORTRAIT.

Miss McAllister was not gone many minutes.

The door soon opened again and she entered, followed by a servant bearing a picture.

It was the portrait of Evelyn Wentworth.

"Place it here upon this table," she said, in a low tone to the man; "and then you may go."

He obeyed, and then quietly left the room.

As soon as the door closed after him, Miss McAllister turned to their visitor and said:

"I want you to come and stand beside this

picture, dear, and let Mr. Paxton compare your face with the one painted there."

She took the young girl by the hand and led her forward.

She went tremblingly, a sort of mist coming over her eyes so that she could not see distinctly; but as she came close to it she bent forward and scanned it eagerly.

There was one moment of breathless silence, then a low cry of surprise and joy burst from her.

"Yes—yes, it is true—I know that she was my mother," she said, looking tearfully up into Miss McAllister's face, while her own glowed with a tender happiness which made her exceedingly lovely.

"Mr. Paxton," said the old lady; "come here and look for yourself. I think this test cannot fail to put to flight all your doubts."

She turned to the girl and placed her side by side with the picture as she spoke.

Philip felt obliged to obey, but he came forward very reluctantly, while Arley also bent forward to look.

The face of the young maiden and that of the portrait were almost identical.

There were the same large, deep-blue eyes, the same soft, sunny-brown hair and broad, low forehead with its straight, shapely brows. The nose of the young girl was a trifle more delicate in outline than that of the portrait, but the mouth was the same—sweet and tender in expression, and with a sensitive droop at the corners that was somewhat peculiar—while the chin of each rounded and curved into the beautiful white throat were precisely alike.

"Do you wish—can you ask any stronger proof than that before you?" Miss McAllister asked of Philip, a trifle sternly. "There cannot be the slightest doubt that you are looking upon mother and child. It has always been a matter of regret to me that Arley did not bear more resemblance to her parents; I have thought at times that I could trace something of her father's expression in her features, but it was never very satisfactory; but it is all explained now, and from this moment I must own this child as Evelyn Wentworth's daughter."

"Oh, auntie, auntie!" wailed poor Arley, stretching out her hand with a despairing gesture to her, and feeling almost as if she had been driven forth into exile as she listened to these words; while Philip Paxton, convinced at last because he was obliged to be, clenched his teeth and ground his heel into the soft carpet in impotent rage.

Without warning or preparation twenty thousand pounds were swept beyond his reach, while he and his bride of but an hour or two were, comparatively speaking, beggars.

Miss McAllister went to Arley and drew her head upon her bosom.

"Be still, my child," she said, brokenly, but with exceeding tenderness. "I do not love my darling one with the less. Surely you do not imagine that the affection of eighteen years' growth can be transferred to another simply by a question of mistaken identity? No, dear; but I must be just—I must acknowledge the evidence of my own senses. While from this moment I must own this young girl as Evelyn's child, you will ever be the same to me that you have been—a daughter in all but name. You two shall be like a pair of sisters, and I shall claim you both."

She held out her hand, as she ceased speaking, to Isa; who came forward and raised it to her lips, while tears streamed over her cheeks.

She had never expected to be received so heartily and kindly into the bosom of a family where another had reigned so absolutely for so long.

"Oh! but who am I—to whom do I belong—who are my kin? I am stripped of everything—I have not even a name left," Arley cried, despairingly.

She had been very brave to renounce everything when convinced that it did not belong to her, but she felt very desolate and unhappy

just now. She would not have minded it so much if Philip had been noble and manly regarding the matter; but it almost seemed as if he, too, had deserted her in this trying hour.

"She should not say that when she has her husband's name," Ina said, sorrowfully, and looking up with tears into Miss McAllister's face, "and she must retain that of 'Arley' also; she has always been known by it, and it would be very awkward to change it now. All my life I have been called 'Ina,' and I don't believe I could answer to any other. She"—glancing at Arley—"will be known after this as Mrs. Paxton, and so I will assume the name of Wentworth; in nothing else need there be any change. You are very kind to receive me so cordially as your niece, and I shall always love you for it; if I had not made her so unhappy—with a sympathetic look at the weeping bride—"I should be content."

Miss McAllister looked greatly relieved as she listened to this, while she longed to take the sweet maiden into her arms and kiss her for trying to make the rough way so smooth for them all.

"Arley, do you hear?" she said, turning to her; "there is to be no change; Ina wishes to retain her first name, and desires that you will keep yours."

"Ah! but that does not explain who I am," cried the poor child, who, weary and weak from all the excitement of the day, and out to the heart by her husband's strange treatment, was fast losing all self-control.

"You are Philip Paxton's wife," Miss McAllister said, with a glance of stern appeal at the newly-made husband, who still stood before the portrait of Evelyn Wentworth as if in a trance.

She felt that he ought to come and comfort the afflicted girl, and not stand there moodily brooding over what could not be helped.

He started at her words, as if a viper had stung him, muttered an angry oath, and without even so much as a glance at his unhappy bride, he abruptly turned and left the room.

This was the one bitter drop too much in Arley's cup of woe, and with a moan of pain she lay back in Miss Angeline's arms and fainted away.

Philip Paxton stalked downstairs, looking like anything rather than a happy bridegroom. His face was startlingly pale, his eyes glowed with a fierce, lurid light, and his manner was wild and excited.

Meeting Will Hamilton at the foot of the stairs—for he was going up to see what was detaining the young couple so long—he told him that Arley had been taken suddenly ill, and would be unable either to take leave of her friends or go on her journey at present, and he begged him to excuse them both to the company.

Then without waiting to explain anything further he dashed on into the library to hide himself, his rage and disappointment, from every eye.

But here he found another lion in his path, in the form of a strange gentleman, who was sitting quietly there, and apparently waiting for some one.

"I beg pardon," Philip said, stiffly, and glaring at him almost savagely. "I was not aware that there was any one here."

"My name is Alden, sir, and I am waiting for a young lady who has gone upstairs to see Mrs. Paxton," the man returned, rising and bowing politely to Philip.

Philip bit his lip fiercely at this intelligence.

"I am Mr. Paxton," he said, abruptly, "and I have just left my wife."

"Indeed! then doubtless you have learned the nature of the business which brought Miss Corrillon and myself hither. I regret that we were obliged to come to-day, but it could not be avoided, and, indeed, Miss Wentworth's—your wife's—lawyer advised us to see her, and you also, before you went away," Mr. Alden explained.

"Don't you think your errand a strange and

rather doubtful one?" Philip asked, with curling lips.

"A strange one it certainly is; a doubtful one, no. I had no doubt regarding the identity of the young lady, who, for three years past, has been a member of my family, even before I saw the portrait which a servant has just removed from this room. I asked whose picture it was, and was told that it was Miss Wentworth's mother; but I certainly never saw a closer resemblance between mother and daughter than there is between my protegee and that portrait."

"And if you succeed in establishing the identity of your protegee, as you call her, I suppose you expect to obtain for her the fortune which Dr. McAllister left," Philip said, with a sneer.

The gentleman changed colour slightly at this.

"If her identity is proved, there can be no doubt that it properly belongs to her," Mr. Alden answered, with grave politeness. "It is Miss Corrillon's wish not to make any trouble, or put forth any claim for this money; but it seems to me that full justice should be done, and the fortune which rightly belongs to her be made over to her."

"She never shall have it if I can prevent it," Philip retorted. "I am a lawyer, and I shall do my utmost to save my wife from being wronged in this way. Dr. McAllister left it to her, and no other. He brought her up from a little child, believing she belonged to him. He loved her as his own, and he meant that she alone should have his money."

"Yes, that is doubtless all true," replied his companion; "but if the revelation of to-day had been made while he was living—if he had learned that Mrs. Paxton was not the child of his daughter, as he had always supposed, and if it had been proved, on the other hand, that Ina Corrillon was, your common sense, sir, as well as my own, tells you that his will would have been very different, without regard to what his affection might have dictated."

The man's argument was very sensible and forcible, and Philip knew well enough, if the matter was pushed, that the law would give that coveted twenty thousand pounds to the new claimant, and the thought exasperated him beyond endurance, and he put an end to the debate by abruptly walking to the other side of the room.

He was bound to acknowledge to himself, in consideration of the proofs which the girl had presented, and her wonderful resemblance to the portrait, that she was indeed and in truth the child of Evelyn Wentworth. He knew that any jury before whom the facts should be presented would so rule; but it was a most bitter pill for him to swallow.

What now would become of all the hopes and plans which had so depended upon the winning of Arley's fortune?

He had not a hundred pounds of his own in the world, but the thought had not given him the slightest trouble until now. He had felt comfortably secure from all pecuniary anxiety with the snug income which he believed his wife would bring him.

He knew that they could live in a very easy, happy way upon it; while, with his talents and the reputation which he had been rapidly acquiring during the last two or three years, he believed it would not be long before he would be independent.

But now the loss of this money maddened him, and made him reckless of what he said or did, particularly when he remembered how he had stooped to win it.

"What on earth are we to do?" he muttered gloomily to himself. "Here I am, saddled with a wife poorer than I am—that is if this fortune has to go, as I fear it must—and I see nothing but pinching poverty before us—at least for the present. I swear my pride will not stand it! I expected to live at my ease and in style—to go about in the same society in which Arley has always moved, and enjoy the luxuries of life. But now nothing remains to us but to hide ourselves in cheap lodgings, and live from

hand to mouth. I vow I never will do it! I'll turn Bohemian and live by my wits first. I haven't the courage to face all London after this ignominious tumble from the pinnacle of my glory."

While he was thus absorbed in his bitter musings the door opened again, and the inoffensive object of his wrath entered.

She went up to Mr. Alden and said, with a smile:

"I have kept you waiting a long time, sir. I am sorry, but there seemed so much to explain and talk over."

"And do they acknowledge your claim?" her companion asked, with a doubtful glance at Philip.

"Yes, sir, at least Mrs. Paxton and Miss McAllister have been very kind; they have received me very cordially, and I am henceforth to be known as Ina Wentworth. I am to keep my old first name and Mrs. Paxton is to retain hers, as we both think it would be very awkward to change."

"And the—" Mr. Alden began, eagerly, but she stopped him with a gesture, and a warning look at Philip.

"That is as far as we have been able to get as yet," she said, with a significant glance.

"Mrs. Paxton is, of course, greatly disturbed and excited over the revelations which I have made, and the mystery with which they enshroud her own identity."

"That of course is to be expected; but I am very glad to know that so few difficulties have been placed in your path," Mr. Alden returned, evidently well pleased with the result of her interview.

"Miss McAllister insists," Ina continued, "that I shall remain here with her; she says she will be left alone when Mrs. Paxton goes away, and she feels that this ought henceforth to be my home. I have consented to stay for a while at least, so you will be obliged to take my regrets to Mrs. Alden, and go home without me," she concluded, with a smile that was not altogether tearless, as she thought of the three little ones whom she had learned to love so well.

"That is as it should be, and you will probably remain here permanently," Mr. Alden remarked, with evident satisfaction, as he arose to go, then added, in a tone of genuine regret,—

"We shall be loth to lose you, Miss Corrillon—Miss Wentworth," he corrected, with a smile, "but, of course, we rejoice over your good fortune. You have been very faithful and kind to my children, who love you dearly, and will miss you sadly."

"And I them," Ina returned, in a husky voice, "while I shall always regard you and your wife as among my best friends."

She held out her hand as she ceased speaking, and Mr. Alden shook it heartily, and then took his departure.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE ENGAGEMENT-RING.

INA WENTWORTH stood in deep thought for several moments after her friend had gone, then, with a resolute air, she walked directly across the room, and stood before Philip Paxton.

"Mr. Paxton," she began, in a frank, straightforward way, "I do not wish you to regard me as an enemy who has stolen into your camp to plunder you. I tell you honestly I do not want your wife's fortune, I have never even thought of taking it from her; for," she said, with a charming smile, which revealed two rows of white, even teeth, "having never known the convenience or luxury of possessing so much money, I can still be very happy without it."

Philip lifted his head and looked at her in a sceptical way.

"You are very good to say so," he said, coldly.

She flushed at his tone, which was almost insulting.



"It is evident that you do not intend to be friendly with me," she said, with dignity, "but I do not know that that need interfere with my plans and intentions; if, however, you will use your influence with your wife, and persuade her that I do not want this money, and make her keep it, I shall be very glad. I think from what Miss McAllister has said, that she desires me to make my home with her, as Mrs. Paxton is going away, and if I can get a few pupils I have no doubt that I can earn sufficient for my other needs."

"Indeed! Perhaps you are fishing for the old lady's fortune also," Philip said, rudely. Ina lifted a pair of surprised eyes to his gloomy face.

"I did not even know that she had a fortune," she remarked, simply, but the crimson blood swept hotly up to her brow as she spoke.

She was very indignant at him for his impudence, but she was not lacking in spirit for all her gentleness. She drew herself up proudly, and said, looking straight into his eyes:

"I perceive that it is useless for me to attempt to conciliate you upon any point; but what I have said to you I have said in perfect good faith, and you can accept it and act upon it, or you can reject it, if you choose."

With a graceful little bow she turned and left him, without another word, while he gazed wonderingly after her, and muttered:

"Who would ever believe that she was reared in a fisherman's hut? She speaks and acts like a lady of culture and refinement, and she must have improved her later opportunities wonderfully well to appear so polished. However, I suppose it is one of those instances where 'blood will tell.' But—hang it!—if she really is Captain Wentworth's daughter, who on earth is Arley? and why couldn't this disavowment have happened yesterday—last week—any time rather than to-day? I'm in a dudge of a pickle, or shall be, if I cannot manage some way to keep this fortune. These disappointments and reverses, one after another, are making a veritable demon of me. I feel as if I could do something desperate if I am pushed much closer to the wall."

He arose, and paced the room excitedly, muttering irritably to himself, while his face was deeply flushed and overcast.

Poor Arley, upstairs, meantime had come to herself, and was trying to look her fate as calmly and sensibly in the face as possible.

Her proud spirit utterly rebelled against appropriating for even another day, that which rightfully belonged to another, and she told Miss McAllister that everything must be made over to Ina at once.

"I honour you, dear, for your readiness to deal justly," the old lady said, with a glow of pride in the girl's rectitude. "It is but right, of course, according to the law of heritages, that she should come into possession of her grandfather's fortune, and I know that the consciousness of having performed a noble deed will more than repay you for the loss of it."

If she could have known of all that Arley was to suffer in consequence of it, she might not have spoken quite so confidently upon this point.

"Doubtless it will be a little uncomfortable at first," she added, "not to receive your accustomed income, and it will probably be a disappointment to your husband to have you deprived of any of the independence which have hitherto enjoyed, but, believe me, you will be no loser in the end."

She did not tell her then of her own secret determination to bequeath to her the whole of her own fortune, which would amount to nearly as much as her brother's, if she proved true to herself and the right, and cheerfully relinquished to Ina her inheritance.

Will Hamilton, with great tact, made both Philip's and Arley's excuses, and the wedding guests politely retired, with many expressions of regret for the bride's sudden illness.

Lady Elaine went up to see her before she left, and was told something of what had

occurred, and was both shocked and grieved for her friend.

She wound her arms about her, and tried to whisper some words of comfort; but Arley could not bear them, even from her, just then.

"I am so confused and nervous, dear Elaine, that I cannot talk about it now; I will write you the whole story when I am more calm. I have not, however," she added with a wan smile, "forgotten what you said to me when we were at Hazelmere, and shall try to 'make the best of it,' although there does not seem to be any best about it to me just now."

"He knows all about it, dear, and He will lead you in just the best way. Cast all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." Lady Elaine answered, tenderly, and they left her, with a heart full of minglings as to how Philip would bear this blow to his hopes.

She felt that he ought to have been by Arley's side, for he could comfort her as no one else could; but he was nowhere to be seen, and his absence did not look well for her happiness.

"Philip, it is of no use for you to talk to me in any such way; my mind is made up to do what is right, and nothing will turn me from my purpose."

Thus Arley Paxton spoke, after an hour's fruitless argument with her husband on the contested point of that twenty thousand pounds.

As soon as she had felt equal to the ordeal, she had dismissed everyone from her room, and sent for her husband to come to her.

"But I think I should have a voice in this matter, I am your husband, and I have rights now to which should be considered," he said, moodily.

"That is true; I have promised to 'love honour, and obey you,' and I shall gladly do so in everything possible. But I cannot sacrifice principle even to you."

"Sacrifice! fiddlesticks!" he retorted, impatiently. "Dr. McAllister gave this money to you—he meant you to have it, and no one else, and I am bound that you shall keep it."

"We have gone over all that ground before," Arley said, wearily; "but, Philip, reverse the position. Suppose that I had been this girl, and at the same time your wife, and the knowledge had come to us that a mistake had been made in our identity, and that I ought to be in her place and she in mine, would you have contended then that she ought to keep the fortune which Dr. McAllister left to his granddaughter, or would you have said that blood should inherit, and that it rightly belonged to me?"

Philip Paxton flushed hot at this question, and felt very uncomfortable with those clear eyes of his wife fixed so searchingly upon him.

"That alters the case, of course; still—" he stopped and looked ashamed for having admitted so much.

"No, it does not alter the case at all," Arley said, in a clear, firm tone. Then going up to him, and laying her hand upon his arm, she asked, with white, trembling lips: "Philip, did you marry me for this money?"

He shook her hand off nervously.

"What an absurd question, Arley!" he exclaimed, irritably; yet the red blood flooded his whole face.

"Then, if you did not—if you married me for myself, and because you loved me as—I love you, how can you ask me to do this dishonourable thing and expect to retain your respect and affection for me? I am sorry that I must come to you penniless. I was glad to have this fortune for your sake, because I know that, though you are talented in your profession, you have your own future to carve out, and I hoped that this money would be a help to you. But I will help you with every power that I have. I will give my whole life to assist you to rise, and become all that you desire to be. I will try not to hamper you in any way, and I believe we shall be very happy, far happier than if we committed a theft—for I can view

'the keeping of this money in no other light—to secure a foundation to build upon.'

Philip appeared to be absorbed in profound thought for several moments after she ceased speaking. But at last, looking up at her, he said, with an air of desperation,—

"If you persist in this quixotic idea—in this piece of mad folly—we are nothing but a couple of beggars. I may as well tell you, first as last, that I have lost everything that I had—lost it in a foolish speculation, and I have not a hundred pounds in the world; so if you give up all your claims to this girl, we shall have no home and nothing to depend upon. Can you tame? give up all this?" he asked, looking around upon the luxurious furnishings of her room; "can you bear to leave this beautiful home, where you have been accustomed to have everything that heart could wish, and go into miserable lodgings, such as I, in my present circumstances, can afford to give you? Can you give up your fine clothes, your jewels, your ponies and carriage, and everything that has hitherto made life so attractive to you?"

"Yes, I can give them all up, Philip, because I know that it is right and just that I should. I would rather never have another dainty or pretty thing as long as I live, than to have it in a dishonourable way—my honour, and a clear conscience, are more to me than all the luxuries of the universe," Arley replied, firmly and earnestly.

"Well, I shall not relinquish your claim without a struggle, I can assure you," Philip returned, reddening with anger; "we cannot afford to be deprived of everything thus by a single blow."

"We have each other left, Philip," Arley said, gently.

"Yes, and poverty staring us in the face. We cannot very well eat each other, and how we are to live is more than I can tell," he retorted, with bitter sarcasm.

"How much does your profession yield you annually?" the young wife asked with a sigh, a look of keen pain in her eyes.

"I have no stated income—I have just what I work for," he said.

"But about what has it averaged during the last two or three years?" she persisted.

"Perhaps three hundred pounds. But I have made a good deal by speculating outside, and if I had been successful in this last venture, I should have been a rich man comparatively to-day."

Three hundred pounds a year! It seemed very little to the inexperienced girl. She had spent more than twice that amount on her trousseau, and she had never in all her life known what it meant to be economical.

Miss McAllister's income was as large as her own, while her wants were comparatively few, and she had always been ready to fill the purse of her pretty niece, if it chanced to get empty before her quarterly allowance was due, and there she had never had a wish ungratified.

But notwithstanding, the thought of poverty and self-denial did not daunt her, for she was a brave and honourable little woman at heart, as we shall see.

"It seems very little," she said, thoughtfully, "but I suppose there are people who live upon much less than even that, and are quite happy, Philip," with a little tremulous smile, that was exceedingly pitiful. "If you will not mind being burdened with a penniless wife, I shall be content. I shall not need anything new in the way of clothing for a long time. We can take a couple of comfortable, yet inexpensive rooms somewhere, and have our meals brought in to us, and I am sure we shall do very well, and be very happy."

He turned away from her impatiently, a sneer on his lip, and muttering something that she could not hear.

She looked to him sadly, an expression of bitter pain in her dark eyes. She was a bride of only a few hours, and this experience was different from the happiness and enjoyment which she had anticipated.

(To be continued.)

## FICETIA.

—I had been told that he was a good fellow, but I had not known that he was a good fellow. I had been told that he was a good fellow, but I had not known that he was a good fellow. I had been told that he was a good fellow, but I had not known that he was a good fellow.

The cobweb corner is coming. Just in time for the fly season.

Tommy was a boy who was discovered in the act of concealing a piece of mince pie in his mother's closet. He explained that he was only trying to kill time. He was out of the closet in a hurry.

First Trap: "Hello!" Second Trap: "Hello!" First Trap: "Where'd you get your new clothes?" Second Trap: "Sh! don't you give it away! Farmers have begun to dress up the scarecrows in the cornfields."

A woman was summoned as witness in a certain case. The judge, finding that the witness was readying badly, interrupted him, saying: "I beg you to forget your profession for a moment and tell us the truth."

Proctor, the messenger, found that a man over said was ordered by Fogg the other day. Being asked to give his opinion as to the best remedy for polydipsy, he replied, "Mrs. Fogg."

"What lovely hair she has! I suppose it is her own?" "Oh, yes; of course it is. No doubt if you ask her she will grow it, for she told me only a few days ago that she was careful to keep all her receipts."

An address to Charles II., who was so noted for his ready wit, prayed that His Majesty might live as long as the sun, moon, and stars should endure. "Faith," said the King, "if I do, my successor will have to reign by candle-light."

A woman who had just had the mumps, she hopes to gracious she will never have to go through such an experience again. For two whole weeks she hasn't been able to jaw her husband or let out a single neighbourhood secret—awful martyrdom!

"Well, Jim, I wish you good morning." Jim: "What are you going in there?" "Sleep." "Yes; I always go once a month and take a bath; whether I want it or not." Jim (in disgust): "Regular waste of soap, that's what I call it."

"My boys," said a strict churchwoman to her children at the beginning of the Lenten season, "I should like very much to have you deny yourselves something during the solemn weeks of Lent. Will you do it?" "I will, mamma," said Johnny. "I'll give up going to school."

Miss Gramscrow, to young widow whose husband has left a large fortune: "That is the smartest mourning costume I have seen you wear in three days, and each lovelier and more becoming than the other."—Young widow: "Oh, my dear, I have forty—but such a bother as they were to be made! At one time I almost wished that poor George hadn't died."

The "Ancient Column."—Herr Papp, the shoemaker, cannot find the present address of Franklin Irene, who has gone away without leaving her bill for fifty marks. He has, therefore, inserted the following in the papers:—"Ah, Irene, my love, my jewel, my guiding star! I have an important communication to make to you. Pray send your address to J. Z., Post-office, Pforzheim."

A PRETENTIOUS woman, the wife of a country magistrate, was in the habit of constantly referring to the fact that her husband was "on the bench." At a party one afternoon, the belle of the occasion, who was also a great heiress, on hearing the lady make the usual reference said, "That reminds me of my grandfather's career. He was on the bench for more than forty years."—"Indeed! I never heard that any of your family had been on the bench!" exclaimed the lady.—"Oh, yes, nonchalantly answered the belle; "it was a shoemaker's bench."

"A WIFE'S GREATEST TRIAL" is the title of a new book. We have not read it, but suspect that it is her husband.

A woman one day stopped a hare in the public path and said, "Come now, I want a candid expression of opinion. Am I not a better looking animal than the fox?" "To be honest about it, you are not," replied the hare. "Ah! then you insult me! Take that—and that—and that!" The poor hare was knocked down and rolled over and cuffed about, and her life was saved only by her superior fleetness. Moral: It is better to agree with a wolf near at hand than to praise a fox five miles away.

A GENTLEMAN went into a fancy shop one day to buy something. It was early, and the shopkeeper a little boy and he were alone in the house. The shopkeeper had to go upstairs to get his cash-box in order to procure some change, but before doing so he went into the little room next to the shop and whispered to the boy: "Watch the gentleman that he doesn't steal anything," and, bringing him out, sat him on the counter. As soon as the shopkeeper returned the child sang out, "Pa, he didn't steal anything; I watched him."

Doctor: "What do you complain of mostly?" Antique Maiden: "I have no pain anywhere, but I am so often sad that I fear I may become a victim of melancholia." "Often sad, eh?" "Yes, and without any reason. What do you think can matter?" "Straining the nerves of the eyes often produces sadness, and nothing is worse than the reflected light from polished surfaces. That is probably what ails you." "But there is no polished surface in my room except the mirror." "Exactly. Remove the mirror."

A GOOD ENOUGH INCOME.—"You appear to be gay and happy," said Tompkins to Algernon Brown, whom he met at a ball. "You look well-fed, and well-dressed, and all that. Must have a good income, I presume." "Oh, yes," replied Brown. "I can't complain. I have my salary—three hundred; then I make a couple of hundred by my literary labours—that makes five hundred; then I run in debt a couple of hundred—that makes seven hundred. A single man that couldn't exist on that ought to be ashamed of himself."

Some of the richest men in Austin started in life in a very modest way, and are still plain, unpretentious people, but their sons put on a great deal of style. One of the latter, who was better posted about other people's affairs than his own family's remarked sneeringly to an acquaintance:—"Your father was nothing but a simple stone-mason." "I know where you got that information," quietly remarked the other. "From whom did I get it?" "From your father?" "How do you know that?" "Because your father used to be my father's head-carrier."

ONE Patrick Maguire had been appointed to a situation the reverse of a place-of-all-work, and his friends who called to congratulate him were much astonished to see his face lengthen on the receipt of the intelligence. "A sinecure, is it?" he exclaimed. "The deuce thank them for that same. Sure don't I know what a sinecure is. It's a place where there is nothing to do, and they pay you by the piece!"

ONE day a pompous little fellow at a dinner table was boasting of the great men with whom he was on intimate terms. He had been in constant correspondence with Longfellow, had lunched with Tennyson, was on friendly relations with the Prince of Wales, and, in short, knew everything and everybody. At length a quiet individual at the further end of the room broke in on the conversation with the question: "My dear sir, did you happen to know the Siamese Twins when they were in this country?" Our hero, who evidently had a talent for lying, but no real genius, at once replied, "The Siamese Twins, sir? Yes, sir. I became very intimate with one of them, but I never had the good fortune to meet the other."

It has been discovered that the knots which a vessel makes at sea depend upon the tide.

The petroleum speculator is like the Scotch lover of the old song; his art is in the ill-lands.

Be careful in your grammatical exercises. There is no study more liable to accidents.

The man who makes the speeches for the bicycle club is called the spokesman.

Fashion rules the hour. Even our laws have to be cut to a new mould.

The rule governing these pedestrian matches is the two-foot rule.

A crusty old bachelor says that Adam's wife was called Eve because, when she appeared, man's day of happiness was drawing to a close.

ALEXANDER GUN, who belonged to the Gunpowder House at Edinburgh, was dismissed for improper conduct. The entry opposite his name in the book stood thus:—"A Gun, discharged for making a false report."

WAITING FOR A GOOD OFFER.—A bachelor being asked why he didn't marry, answered that as the women were claiming the right to go to the polls, they would soon claim the right to go courting, and that he was only waiting for a good offer.

It is remarkable how far things can beagled in the Arctic regions. The North Pole is a splendid place for the ice-afire. (The brute who wrote this is supposed to mean eyesight. Picking pockets, according to Dr. Johnson, must be his ordinary means of livelihood.)

A NOBLE lord asked a clergyman once, at the bottom of his table, why the goose, if there was one, was always placed next to the parson. "Really," replied the clergyman, "I can give no reason for it; but your question is so old that I shall never see a goose again without thinking of your lordship."

A BLUNDERING compositor, in setting up the toast, "Woman, without her, man would be a savage," got the punctuation in the wrong place, which made it read: "Woman, without her man, would be a savage." The mistake was not discovered until the editor's wife undertook to read the proof.

A LADY thought it would look interesting to faint away at a party, when one of the company began bathing her temple and head with vinegar, upon which she suddenly started up and exclaimed: "For Heaven's sake, put nothing on that will change the colour of my hair!"

HE came home late the other night, and his wife woke up and found him with a burning match trying to light the cold water tap over the marble basin in his dressing-room. "James," she said, "that is not the gas burner." "I know it now, my love," he replied, unsteadily; "fact is, I've been over-worked, and that's the reason I made the mistake." "Yes, you look as if you had been lifting a good deal," she quietly answered as she turned to her pillow.

TOURIST, to Highland seaman on board steamer, passing through Rethym Bay:—"I suppose there is good fishing to be got here at times?" Seaman:—"Ferry cool fishing in fact at times. If you'll not get them at was time, you're sure to get them the same time again." Tourist who thinks he'll change the conversation:—"How fast does this boat travel?" Seaman:—"She can go half-a-hour in five minutes."

THE ONLY METHOD.—"You are not an early riser, are you?" said Mrs. Brown to Mrs. Jones. "No; the reason is that I cannot wake John up before noon. I have tried the clock alarm, blank cartridges and bell-ringing; but he sleeps like a dead man." "You ought to try the plan I used on my husband," said Mrs. Brown. "How is that?" "Pull a cork out of a beer bottle, and he will spring right out on the floor!"



## SOCIETY.

At the first of the Duchess of Argyll's garden-parties at Argyll lodge, Kennington, some pretty dresses were worn. The Marchioness of Salisbury wore black satin, her white bonnet being trimmed with mauve, and the Lady Grenville Cecil wore cream lace and satin, with lace hat *en suite*; the Marchioness of Hamilton was in black; Lady Adelaide Taylor, pale mauve surate silk, and bonnet of the same trimmed with Neapolitan violet. Lady Rose, a beautiful dress of bisont ottoman trimmed with red velvet, and having panels of rich red embroidery, cream lace bonnet bound with red velvet, and finished with a bright feather. Baroness Bardett-Countess, blue satin skirt and bodice and drapery of blue satin spotted with red velvet, white bonnet trimmed with pink flowers, and white lace cape. It was an extremely enjoyable affair.

A large and distinguished party of guests assembled on the 9th of July at a garden fête and conversations held on the lawn and in the buildings of the Health Exhibition. The entertainment was given by the council of the Society of Arts and the executive council of the International Health Exhibition. The visitors were received on their arrival at the main entrance by the Duke of Buckingham, chairman of the Health Exhibition Board, and by Sir Frederick Abel, C.B., on behalf of the Society of Arts, and Sir James Paget.

The general arrangements for the amusement of the guests, who numbered at one time upon 20,000, were all that could be desired. The scene in the gardens when filled with a fashionable throng, at any time striking in its extent and comprehensiveness, received the additional attraction of an exceptionally good display of electric lighting. By arrangement, most of the exhibitors kept their stalls open until a late hour, and the machinery was run as during the day.

In the gardens the illumination was very effective, every terrace walk being mapped out by brilliant rows of variegated oil lamps and Japanese lanterns. The central fountains below the great conservatory were in full play. An ample supply of music was provided by the bands of the Grenadier Guards, the Coldstream Guards, the band of the 1st Regiment of the French Engineers, and the Magdeburg Cuirassiers, while, lastly, a Chinese band performed in the garden in front of the Chinese Restaurant by permission of the Commission, who had also arranged for a supply of tea to all and sundry of the visitors. In the French Court about midnight, Mme. Sarah Bernhardt distinguished herself. The company separated generally about one o'clock.

A numerous and fashionable company assembled at the church of the Oratory, Brompton, to witness the marriage of Mr. Arkwright, of Sutton Scarsdale, Derbyshire, with Agnes Mary, eldest daughter of Mr. John J. T. Somers-Cocks, and niece of Lord Somers. The bride was attired in rich cream white satin, the train being bordered with a fringe of orange blossoms, and trimmed with cream satin bows. She wore a small wreath of orange blossoms in her hair, and her tulle veil, which was sprinkled all over with tiny sprays of orange buds, was fastened to the hair by a large diamond crescent (Lady H. Somers's present). On her shoulder was a spray of diamonds of unusual size, and her other ornaments included single-stone diamond earrings and necklace (gifts from the bridegroom).

The bridesmaids had not a vestige of colour about them. Their dresses were composed of cream spotted net trimmed with cream lace, and looped with satin ribbons over white silk, and veils to match were prettily arranged on the heads. The bridegroom presented each with a pearl spray, and all carried bouquets of the choicest white flowers.

## STATISTICS.

**FOUND IN THE REGENT'S CANAL.**—A return recently issued shows that in 1882 forty-four human corpses were found in the Regent's Canal within the metropolitan police district, and in 1883 the number was forty-three.

**STITCHES IN A SHIRT.**—The following singular calculation of the number of stitches in a plain shirt has been made by a sempstress in Leicester:—Stitching the collar, four rows, 3,000; sewing the ends, 500; button holes, and sewing on buttons, 150; sewing the collar and gathering the neck, 1,204; stitching wristbands, 1,228; sewing the ends, 68; button holes, 143; hemming the alits, 261; gathering the sleeves, 840; setting on wristbands, 1,468; attaching on shoulder-straps, three rows each, 1,880; hemming the bottom, 393; sewing the sleeves, 2,554; setting in sleeves and gussets, 3,050; tapping the sleeves, 1,526; sewing the seams, 843; setting side-gussets in 424; hemming the bottom, 1,104—Total number of stitches, 20,649.

## GEMS.

It is our duty to be happy, because happiness lies in contentment with all the Divine will concerning us.

When a man dies men inquire what he has left behind him; angels inquire what he has sent before him.

FAITH has a vision of its own, but no light in which it can distinguish objects except the light of prayer.

EVERY flower in the heavenly garden will be turned Godward, bathing in tints of loveliness in the glory that excels it.

THERE is nothing so true that the damps of error have not warped it; nothing so false that a sparkle of truth is not in it.

We ought not to judge of men's merits by their qualifications, but by the use they make of them.

## HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

**TOMATO SANDWICHES.**—Cut some thin bread-and-butter. Sprinkle over each piece of bread a little fresh mustard-and-oreg, pepper and salt. Cut some raw tomatoes into thin slices, and lay them between the bread-and-butter. Press them gently together, and trim the edges with a sharp knife.

**LOBSTER SALAD.**—Two tablespoonfuls of salad oil, three eggs. Break the eggs, and drop in the oil. Stir together, add a little chopped tarragon and chervil, and a teaspoonful of castor sugar. Well wash a young lettuce, and dry each leaf in a cloth. Cut it up small. Take the best part of a lobster, and divide into small pieces. Cover the lobster and lettuce with the salad dressing, and well mix together. Serve in a salad bowl, with the lobster's head standing up in the centre.

**CARAMEL PUDDING.**—Put a handful of loaf sugar to boil with a quarter of a pint of water until the syrup becomes a deep brown. Warm a small basin, pour the syrup in it, and keep turning the basin in your hand until the inside is completely coated with the syrup, which by that time will have set. Strain the yolks of eight eggs from the whites, and mix them gradually and effectively with one pint of milk. Pour this mixture into the prepared mould. Lay a piece of paper on the top. Set it in a saucepan full of cold water, taking care that the water does not come over the top of the mould, put on the cover, and let it boil gently by the side of the fire for one hour. Remove the saucepan to a cool place, and when the water is quite cold take out the mould, and turn out the pudding very carefully.

## 2TH MISCELLANEOUS.

**"NAIL PORTRAITS"** are the latest fancy among Gallic lovers. A miniature likeness of the beloved one is photographed on the thumb-nail, so that the devoted swain may always have her image before him.

A TRICYCLE trip from Italy through France has been made by two English ladies who have just arrived at Boulogne from Porto Mannie, on the Gulf of Genoa. They rode a sociable, and spent forty-six days on the journey.

**SUPERSTITIONS BREDES.**—Some of the superstitions about Irish brides are amusing. It is an ill omen to rise before the sun the marriage morning; to dream of the croaking of a raven, or to see the shadow of his wing flit by in the sunshine; or to hear the knock of an invisible hand, which, however, should be listened for, or to note a winding-sheet in the candle. It is still more ominous to meet a red-haired woman on the first of May if the wedding is to be the following month, or to tread upon the poisonous beetle, whose death bodes fire or pestilence, or to speak with her lover before meeting him in church; and there are many other equally mysterious saws that are not very alarming because there are as many favourable omens on the other hand to counteract them.

Few have sufficient respect for habit—the ease with which it may be formed—the difficulty with which it can be broken—the magical power with which it smoothes the rough path of duty, and enables us to look with indifference upon the affluents of the world. It is a kind of shield, which the fingers of a boy may, at first, weave of threads light as gossamer, and which yet grows into the strength of steel. By its aid the greatest things are accomplished. The cultivation of proper habits should be impressed on the young. Isolated acts are of little comparative importance. In short, a correct habit of living is a principle without which no one can be happy.

An "umbrella race" and "a cheroot and saddle-up race" were two novel contests introduced at a recent up-country meeting in India. In the former each competitor opened an umbrella sharply in the face of his pony, then mounted without assistance, and rode round the course with his umbrella open. For the latter the conditions were—"competitors with saddle, bridle, cheroot, and box of matches to be formed up ten yards in front of their ponies, which will be picketed; to light cheroot, saddle up, and ride out to flag and home. First past the post with lighted cheroot to win." An "Amazon race" followed, ridden by ladies.

The highest railway in the world is now being constructed on Pike's Peak, Colorado, U.S. The line will run to an altitude of 11,220 feet above the sea-level, and will be a marvellous feat of engineering skill, the thirty miles of road being a succession of complicated curves, with no straight track longer than 300 feet. The maximum gradient will be 316 feet in the mile, and the average about 270 feet. It is hoped that eight miles of the line will be opened this month, and the remainder finished in a year. The cost is estimated at from £2,500 to £3,000 per mile, and the speed is to be fifteen miles an hour.

QUARANTINE Regulations against Cholera cause some curious difficulties on the Franco-Spanish frontier. Along the high road, near the village of Pechina, one side of the way is French, the other Spanish. Accordingly, if a Spaniard merely crosses from his house to a French café opposite for a *petit verre*, he cannot go home again until he has undergone seven days' strict quarantine. Talking of the cholera, some of the Russian shops which sell flags for the National fête, with an eye to business in all cases, have replaced their usual display of tricolor banners by those bearing the Geneva Cross.

## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

SOME ONE.—Use tepid water.

P. H. D.—Most of the statements named are dead.

J. C.—Address a letter to any ocean steamship company's agent in this city.

T. K. B.—I. Your letter has been filed for reference. We will give you an answer as soon as we possibly can. 2. No.

F. A.—Probably the young lady has another beau. You can only wait patiently for more light, and an opportunity of showing her some acceptable attention.

P. P.—It would be better to go directly to the place in Canada from which your uncle wrote to you. You will be likely to ascertain there something in regard to him. He may be dead.

R. A. G.—You are but a child and should obey your mother. Do not think of an elopement, which would certainly be a sad affair for you. Your mother is your best friend and adviser.

E. P.—The young man is probably frightened by his own act in telling you that he loved you. We advise you not to build too strongly upon him. You had better do nothing until he calls upon you.

G. C.—Unless the widow should grow more inclined to you soon, you will waste your time in courting her. The probability regards you as a boy. You had better direct your attention to a younger lady.

L. D. G.—As the ladies were of the same age, it was quite natural for your friends to laugh when you referred to one of them as the elder sister. Don't permit yourself to be annoyed by such trifles.

F. F. R.—You have only to show common civility, with an occasional kindly smile, and if that gentleman is what we take him to be, and attached to you, he will run the chance of another mild rebuff.

LITTLE SCHOOLGIRL.—The author of the lines—

"'Tis better to have loved and lost  
Than never to have loved at all."

is Lord Tennyson. They occur in his "In Memoriam."

P. B.—Pocahontas did not marry Captain John Smith whom she rescued. She became the wife of John Rolfe, and was baptised under the name of Rebecca. The wedding took place in England.

C. R. D.—Make your application in person, or get some friend to draft for you a letter stating your qualifications, and giving the necessary references as to character, habits, etc.

P. B.—1. No. 2. As a rule, letters are answered in the order in which they are received. In some cases a short time is required for research.

N. S. A.—1. Cold water bathing, night and morning, will help you. 2. Give up the use of tobacco. You are too young and nervous to smoke. 3. Your penmanship may be improved. Practice daily.

R. P. W.—You have given all the consideration to this matter that you could give, and if the gentleman takes the responsibility of insisting on carrying out his wishes, notwithstanding the circumstance you mention, we think you may be happy. Many wives are so in spite of such limitations.

M. A. M.—1. Glycerine diluted with borax water will help to remove freckles. 2. Prepared chalk is an excellent dentifrice. If your teeth need to be cleansed, mix a little powdered charcoal with the chalk. 3. Violet powder used in moderation is as good as anything for the face. 4. We know of no remedy that we feel authorized to suggest.

W. F. R.—1. D'Este Guelph is the name of the present royal family of England. 2. The name of the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland and Empress of India is and was Victoria Alexandrina. She is the only child of Edward, Duke of Kent, fourth son of George III., and the Princess Victoria Mary Louise of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld, relict of the hereditary Prince of Leiningen.

L. D.—1. A bee-line is the straightest or shortest distance between two points. This is an American expression, equivalent to "As the crow flies;" but crows do not always fly in a direct line, as bees do when they seek their home. 2. The "Decree of Fontainebleau" was an edict of Napoleon I., ordering the destruction by fire of all English goods. It was so called because dated at Fontainebleau, Oct. 18, 1810.

B. L. D.—1. There is some uncertainty as to the date and place of birth of St. Patrick, a distinguished missionary of the fifth century, commonly known as the apostle of Ireland. The year of his birth is variously assigned to the years 377 and 387, of which the latter, if not even a later date, is more probable. Some writers state that his birthplace was Boulogne-sur-Mer, France; while others claim that it was a town called Kilpatrick, at or near the modern Dumbarton, Scotland. 2. Dark brown hair. 3. It is hard to believe that anyone could withstand the charms of one so pretty as you appear to be. Treat the young man with the greatest consideration, and we guarantee that it will not be long before he loves you dearly. 4. Pretty penmanship.

MINUTE A.—The so-called fan flirtation is executed in the following manner: Carrying in right hand in front of face, follow me; carry in left hand, desirous of acquaintance; placing it on the right ear, you have changed; twirling it in the left hand, I wish to get rid of you; drawing across the forehead, we are watched;

carrying in the right hand, you are too willing; draw through the hand, I hate you; drawing across the cheek, I love you; twirling in right hand, I love another; closing it, I wish to speak to you; drawing across the eye, I am sorry; letting it rest on right cheek, yes; letting it rest on left cheek, no; open and shut, you are cruel; dropping it, we will be friends; fanning slowly, I am married; fanning fast, I am engaged; with handle to lips, kiss me; shut, you have changed; open wide, wait for me.

NIVA B.—You are doing very wrongly in keeping this affair from your aunt's knowledge. You are too young to be receiving company with a view to marriage. You need your aunt's counsel and control. She will prove a kind and wise friend to you.

R. V.—There is a popular belief that boring the ears and wearing gold rings in them is helpful to weak eyes. However, as we are not specialists on the eye, we would not positively pronounce in favour of the plan; but if the case were ours we should have a "consultation" before acting on this advice.

DORA D.—If you love the young man to whom you are engaged, and he loves you, and wants you for his wife, and is willing to take the risk of the threatened "trouble," the fact that the other man will be provoked by your marriage is no valid reason for not keeping your engagement. It is not likely that the "trouble" would amount to much, or last very long.

"I LOCKED IT IN."

I took my grief and locked it in,  
And bolted and barred the door,  
And told myself it had never been,  
And never should be no more.

"For life goes on—and must go—the same  
For months," I said, "and for years.  
A man, and weak? It were scorn and shame!  
Let women give way to tears."

But lo! in the night I heard a sound.  
I woke with a start and cry.  
My grief stood there, with its withes unbound,  
And looked with its awful eyes.

It took my hand, with an icy chill,  
And said, with a mock and a jeer:  
"Your bolts were strong, but I haunt you still;  
You thrust me out: I am here."

I seek the crowd; but it follows there—  
I cannot drive it away.  
The forest wild; it is in the air,  
It gnaws at my heart all day.

And at midnight mirk it comes—the ghost  
And it mocks beside my bed.  
Oh! hopeless moan for the loved and lost.  
Oh! hearts that break for your dead.

G. H. W.

C. B. T.—Rome was founded, according to the legends, 753 B. C. The period of about a century before Christ is often spoken of as singularly corrupt, as far as the aristocracy was concerned. Unfortunately, all the Histories of Rome that go into details are very voluminous. We have not very definite information regarding early Rome. The people were then simple in their habits. The dislike to divorce was marked, and when it took place the sanction of a council of relatives had to be obtained.

P. E. N.—The phenomena of volcanoes, hot springs, and earthquakes, receive a very simple explanation on the hypothesis that the nucleus of the earth still remains in a state of fusion, and that the consolidation of the exterior crust still proceeds, though at an extremely low rate. The fact which now appears to be fully established, that a sensible increase of temperature takes place as we descend from the surface (in deep mines, for example), after passing the depth at which the influence of the solar heat ceases to be felt, furnishes a direct proof of a very high temperature in the interior of the earth. Whether the convulsions which have shaken, as it would seem, the earth to its centre, have been produced by an internal or external force, can never be anything more than matter of speculation and conjecture.

S. W. J.—The Swedes, as a nation, are enterprising, energetic, honest, and thrifty. Intemperance, which at one period, prevailed very extensively among them, has been checked by wise legislation, and crime has greatly decreased. More than half of the population belong to the peasantry or bonde class, who are gradually absorbing the landed property of the kingdom. The cottager or torpar, who hires his house and patch of ground, is below the peasant in social rank. The law formerly prescribed the costumes for the lower classes, but now they dress as they please. Wooden shoes or leather shoes with wooden soles are commonly worn. Men, women, and children labour together in the fields; women do most of the drudgery in the factories.

C. W. P.—1. Having signed a contract with your employer, there is an honourable way of annulling it unless your father is willing to forfeit the bond for the faithful performance of your work. 2. The compound syrup of sarsaparilla is made by reducing to a moderately-coarse powder, adopting the troy ounce throughout, twenty-four ounces of sarsaparilla, three ounces of guaiacum wood and two ounces each of senna and liquorice root. These are mixed with three pints of

diluted alcohol, and then allowed to stand for twenty-four hours, after which the mixture is transferred to a percolator, and ten pints displaced with diluted alcohol. This in turn is evaporated by a water bath to four pints filtered, and ninety-six ounces of coarsely powdered sugar added by aid of heat, and then strained. Five minims each of oil of sassafras and anise, and three minims of oil of gaultheria, are mixed thoroughly with the above.

AMY M.—We think you have gone as far as the young gentleman had any right to expect, and it may be as well to let him *send*, instead of *receive*, the flowers. If he is in earnest he will persevere, without your going any further in the way of encouragement; and if he is not, it is better that you should not commit yourself to any warm expressions. Your writing is fairly good. The spelling is now and then open to criticism. It is not right to write "wright" when you mean the opposite of wrong. But perhaps you were slightly agitated over the subject.

E. D. C.—To pickle cucumbers, first wash them very clean, and then make a pickle of salt and water, sufficiently strong to float an egg, and pour it over them. Put a weight on the top of the vessel to keep the cucumbers under the brine, and let them stand nine days; then take them out and wash them in fresh water. Line the bottom of the kettle with green cabbage leaves, put in the pickles, and as much vinegar and water, mixed in equal quantities, as will cover them. Put a layer of cabbage leaves on the top; bang them over a slow fire; let the water get hot, but do not allow them to simmer, as that would soften them. When they are perfectly green, take them out and let them drain; wipe them dry, put them in jars with some allspice, cloves, and a few small onions or cloves of garlic. A small piece of alum in each jar will keep them firm. Cover your pickles with the best cider vinegar, tie them close, and keep them in a cool, dry place.

K. B. W.—It is generally supposed that the siphon was invented about the second century by Hero of Alexandria, who, in his works, mentions its employment for the purpose of conveying water from one valley to another over the intervening ground. As you are aware, the method or principle on which the siphon acts is by exhausting the tube of the air which it contains, or at least, rarefying it, that the pressure of the atmosphere on the surface of the water will force the liquid up beyond the highest point of the curve of the siphon, when it will descend by the other limb. The siphon is principally used for decanting; it may, however be used to discharge water at the upper extremity, by means of an air vessel at that place. Siphons are sometimes employed in canal making, when it is necessary to cross streams, but great difficulties usually accompany their execution, for they are hard to repair, and through the accumulation of alluvial matter, there is a tendency to choke up the passage. In regard to the purpose you have in view, suggestions of ours would not be of any practical value. You need the services of an experienced engineer, one who would be able to give to your enterprise his personal attention.

C. L. J.—The *Great Eastern* was built at Millwall, on the Thames. Her launching lasted from November 4, 1857, to January 31, 1858. The capital subscribed for her construction having been all expended, a new company was formed, to fit her for sea. On September 7, 1859, she left her moorings at Deptford for Portland Roads. On the voyage an explosion took place at Hastings through some neglect in regard to the casing of one of the chimneys, when ten firemen were killed, and many persons seriously injured. After repairs she sailed for Holyhead, arriving there on October 10. She next proceeded to Southampton for the winter. She sailed for New York June 17, 1860, under the command of Captain Vine Hall, and arrived at her destination on June 28. After being exhibited, she left New York on August 16, and returned to England on August 28. She again sailed for this port on May 1, 1861. In 1865 she performed several voyages to and from New York. Her last trip to that port was made in May, 1863. In 1864 she was chartered to convey the Atlantic telegraph cable.

THE LONDON READER, Post-free. Three-half-pence Weekly; or Quarterly One Shilling and Eightpence.

ALL BACK NUMBERS, PARTS AND VOLUMES are in print and may be had of all booksellers.

NOTICE.—Part 284, Now Ready, price Sixpence; post free, Eightpence. Also Vol. XLII., bound in cloth, 4s. 6d.

ALL LETTERS TO BE ADDRESSED TO THE EDITOR OF "THE LONDON READER," 234, Strand, W.C.

††† We cannot undertake to return rejected Manuscripts.

London: Published for the Proprietor, at 234, Strand, by J. B. SPECK; and Printed by WOODFALL and KINNEAR, Milford Lane, Strand.